D-18
W6754

Library of the Theological Seminary,

PRINCETON, N. J.

Presented by Mr. Samuel Agnew of Philadelphia, Pa.

SCS 1678

Division

Section

Number

CHRIST,

THE

KING and WITNESS

OF

TRUTH,

AND

The Nature, Excellency, and Extent of His Kingdom, as founded in TRUTH, and only promoted by it.

In several DISCOURSES

ON

Christ's Answer to *Pilate*. Joh. 18. 37.

By *Solomon Williams*, A.M.

Pastor of the first Church in *Lebanon*.

Joh. vii. 3. *And this is Life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true GOD, and* JESUS CHRIST *whom Thou hast sent.*

Magna est veritas, & Prævalebit.

BOSTON, Printed by ROGERS and FOWLE, for D. HENCHMAN in Cornhill. 1744.

CONTENTS.

SERMON I.

CHRIST born to be a King. Pag. 1

SERMON II, III.

CHRIST's Witneſs to the Truth. 20

SERMON IV.

CHRIST's Kingdom is in the Souls and Conſciences of Men. 62

SERMON V.

The Way to promote the Kingdom of CHRIST, is by the Evidence of Truth to the Minds of Men. 86

SERMON VI, VII.

All regenerate and renewed Souls are the Subjects of CHRIST. 111

☞ By Reason of the Author's Distance from the Press these *Errors* have escap'd, which the Reader is desir'd to correct.

Page 9. line 7. for 4 read 3d. P. 14. l. 21. nay r. they. P. 24. l. 7. from the Bottom, for *little* r. *tittle*. P. 26. l. 11. for saved r. loved. P. 44, l. 25. for Light r. Life: P. 46. l. 8. for agreed r. argued. P. 60. l. 12. from the Bottom, r. it is *not*. P. 75. l. 4. r. *Coram non Judice*. P. 94. l. 15. from the Bottom, r. Volunteers, P. 98. l. 7. from Bottom, r. Polytheism. P. 118. l. 11. from Bottom dele the second *now*. P. 122. l. 3. r. appear l. 19. r. Prevention. P. 124. l. 3. from the Bottom, for *has* r. *sees*.

CHRIST born to be a KING.

PROPERTY OF
PRINCETON
REC. JUN 1881
THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY

SERMON I.

JOHN XVIII. 37.

---*JESUS answered, Thou say'st that I am a King. To this End was I born, and for this Cause came I into the World, that I should bear Witness unto the Truth. Every one that is of the Truth heareth my Voice.*

IT is observed by some, that this Evangelist St. *John* has recorded little of the History of our blessed Saviour, only so far as was requisite to introduce his Discourses. But now the Time drew near that JESUS must die, he is very particular in relating the Circumstances of his Sufferings, and some of those Circumstances which the other Evangelists had omitted; especially his Sayings, the precious Words which dropped from his Mouth. This Chapter relates how CHRIST was arrested in the Garden, and surrendred himself a Prisoner, though he let them see by smiting them to the Ground, how easily he could have struck them dead by his Word, or have had more than twelve Legion of Angels from Heaven to defend him. Here we are told how he was abused in the High Priest's Court, and how *Peter* in the mean Time denied him, to the 27th Verse; and then how he was prosecuted before *Pilate*, examined by him and

put in Election with the famous Robber *Barabbas*, for the Favour of the People, and loſt it. The 28th Verſe begins the Account of his Arraignment before *Pilate* the Roman Governour, in the *Prætorium*.

I paſs over the Policy, Induſtry, Superſtition and vile Hypocriſy, obſervable in the Proſecution of him by the chief Prieſts and Elders. In the Proſecution *Pilate* demands the Accuſation, or Inditement; and the chief Prieſts in a proud, uncivil, ſpiteful and malicious Manner, demand Judgment againſt him without an Accuſation, as if their delivering a Perſon up under the odious Name, and general Character, of a Malefactor, were ſufficient for the civil Magiſtrate to ground a judicial Sentence upon. *Pilate* remanded him to their own Court to be tried and ſentenced there; and this Banter ſomewhat tamed their Pride, and they are forced to own they had no Authority to judge him. Whereupon we have *Pilate*'s Conference with him. He is ſet to the Bar and examined, and has a Queſtion put to him with a Deſign to enſnare him. *Art thou the King of the Jews?* That King who has been ſo much talked of, and ſo long expected: The Meſſiah. Chriſt anſwers this Queſtion with another, not for Evaſion, (ſays Mr. *Henry*) but as an Intimation to *Pilate* to conſider what *He* did, and upon what Ground he went, Ver. 34. *Pilate* reſents this Anſwer, and takes it very heinouſly, as we ſee Ver. 35. And put another Queſtion to him more general; *What haſt thou done?* that thine own Nation, and particularly the Prieſts are ſo violent againſt thee. Chriſt in his next Reply gives a more full and direct Anſwer to *Pilate's* former Queſtion, explaining in what Senſe he was a King; not ſuch a King as was any Ways dangerous to the Roman Government. Not a ſecular King; for his Kingdom was not ſupported by ſecular Acts and Powers, which he gives as an Evidence of the ſpiritual Nature of his Kingdom, Ver. 36. Hereupon *Pilate* does in the Beginning of the Verſe wherein is my Text, further and more plainly put the Queſtion to him; *Art thou a King then?* Thou ſpeakeſt of a Kingdom, art thou in any Senſe a King? And what Colour haſt thou for any ſuch Claim? In my Text, the Words which follow *Pilate*'s Queſtion, and are Chriſt's

Anſwer

Anſwer to it, we have that good Confeſſion which the Apoſtle, 1 Tim. 6. 3. ſays, *Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt witneſſed before Pontius Pilate. Thou ſay'ſt that I am: a King*, i. e. It is as thou ſay'ſt; I am a King. The Words are an Hebraiſm, implying a Grant, or Conceſſion of the Queſtion. Thou ſay'ſt that which is true, for I am a King. The like we have *Matth.* 26. 64. compared with *Mark* 14. 62. It is as thou ſpeakeſt, or I am what thou haſt named, A King.--The Meſſiah was expected under the Character of a King. *Meſſiah the Prince.* And our Saviour having own'd to *Caiaphas* that he was the Chriſt, would not diſown to *Pilate* that he was a King. He would not ſeem to be inconſiſtent with himſelf.---But he explains himſelf and ſhews how he is a King. As he came to *bear Witneſs to the Truth.* He rules in the Minds of Men by the Power of Truth. The Foundation, and Power, the Spirit, and Genius of the Kingdom of Chriſt is Truth. 'He conquers by the convincing 'Evidence of Truth, he rules by the commanding Power 'of Truth; and the Subjects of his Kingdom are thoſe that 'are of the Truth. All that are in Love with Truth will 'hear the Voice of Chriſt, and own him as their King.'

As God ſhall enable me I ſhall diſcourſe on the Words under the following Obſervations.

1. *Jeſus Chriſt was born, and came into the World to be a King.*
2. *This King came to bear Witneſs to the Truth.*
3. *Chriſt's Kingdom among Men is in their Souls, and Conſciences, and has nothing to do with their Bodies but by them.*
4. *The Kingdom of Chriſt can be promoted no other Way, but by the Evidence of Truth to the Conſciences of Men.*
5. *Every one who is of the Truth, or every renewed and enlightned Soul, is a Subject of Chriſt and will hear his Voice.*

1. *Jeſus Chriſt was born and came into the World to be a King.*

Two Propoſitions are included in this Obſervation which may be diſtinctly conſidered, viz.

1. *Jeſus Chriſt is a King.*
2. *To this End was he born, and came into the World.*

1. *Jeſus Chriſt is a King.*

Before I speak of the Kingdom of Christ here intended, it must be premised, That Christ is by Nature a King, as he is by Nature God. Essential and Eternal God, the Creator of all Things in Heaven and Earth, as is asserted, John 1. 3. *All Things were made by him, and without him was not any Thing made that was made.* And Col. 1. 10. *For by him were all Things created that are in Heaven, and that are in Earth, visible and invisible, whether they are Thrones, or Dominions, or Principalities, or Powers: All Things were created by him, and for him.* And so he has a natural supreme Dominion over all Creatures in Heaven and Earth, an absolute Propriety in them, and Right to govern and dispose of them as he will; and shall reign forever and ever. His Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom, and his Throne is forever and ever. But this is not that Kingly Authority which is spoken of here; For he was not born to be such a King as this, nor did he come into the World for this End. But this Kingdom he had by the unalienable Right of his Godhead, and the Right of Creation: All Creatures being derived from him and depending on his absolute Will, his Right to govern them, and Dominion over them is underived. But that Kingly Power to which he was born, and for which he came into this World was,

1. *To be the Messiah, the King of the Jews.*

This was the Question which *Pilate* asked our Lord. *Art thou the King of the Jews? Ho Bazileus,* that King of the Jews, so much talked of and so long expected? Messiah the Prince? Art thou he? Now to this Question Christ answers that he was the very Person, he was that King, *To this End was he born,* &c. That King who has been the Desire of *Abraham* and all his pious Posterity, and was the general Expectation of the Jews; he was now born King of the Jews. He was their King in a peculiar Manner, as his own People, which God had taken for himself, and formed into a civil and religious Corporation and Society, incorporated them by Laws and a Plan of Government of his own immediate Appointment. He had long governed them by a Theocratical Kind of Government. And now Jesus Christ was born their King; the Eternal Son of God, became Man, one of

of their own Nation a Defcendant from the Royal Family of *David*, his Son, Heir, who had a Right to govern and rule this People, to take the Government of them upon himfelf, to adminifter Law and Judgment to them in the Name and by the Authority of God their fupreme and abfolute King. In this Character he was foretold and prophefied of from the Beginning of that Nation, Gen. 49. 10. Numb. 24. 17. *There fhall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Scepter fhall rife out of Ifrael, &c.* Of Him, and no other Man, the Prophet fpeaks, Ezek. 34. 23, 24. *And I will fet up one Shepherd over them, and he fhall feed them, even my Servant David: He fhall feed them, and he fhall be their Shepherd. And I the Lord will be their God, and my Servant David, a Prince among them.* And Micah 5. 2. *And thou Bethlehem, Ephratah---out of thee fhall He come forth unto me, that is to be Ruler in Ifrael.* Zech. 9. 9.---- *Behold thy King cometh unto thee: he is juft and having Salvation* &c. Now the Gofpel affures us, that all thefe Prophefies were fulfilled in Jefus Chrift, and he was the very Perfon intended in them. Luke 1. 31, 32, 33.----*And fhalt bring forth a Son, and fhalt call his Name Jefus. He fhall be great, and fhall be called the Son of the Higheft; and the Lord God fhall give unto him the Throne of his Father David, and he fhall reign over the Houfe of Jacob forever, and of his Kingdom there fhall be no End.* So he had Right to give Laws to the Jews, and the Vengeance which came on them after their Rejection of him, was fent by him for Treafon and Rebellion againft him as their King, and refufing to receive and own and fubmit to him as their King the Meffiah. As himfelf foretold them in that Parable Luk. 19. 14. 27. *But his Citizens hated him and fent a Meffage after him, faying, We will not have this Man to reign over us.---But thofe mine Enemies which would not that I fhould reign over them, bring hither and flay them before me.*

2. *He is King of the Church of God difperfed in all Ages, and Places in the World.*

The Prophecies of him as King of *Ifrael*, and of the Jews, or King in *Zion*, did not fo much refpect the Nation of the Jews as the fpiritual *Ifrael* and People of God, the Children of *Abraham* by Faith, or his fpiritual Seed; of whom many great

great and glorious Things are ſpoken by the Prophets which never had their Accompliſhment in the Jewiſh Nation, but in the Goſpel Church, which is brought into the like Covenant-Relation to God as the People of *Iſrael* once were : i. e. They are become the peculiar People of the Lord, and his own Inheritance. As the Jews were once the Church of God, and his only peculiar People in the World, ſo the Goſpel or Chriſtian Church which are the People and Inheritance of God, are now taken into the like Relation, and in the Language of Scripture called by the ſame Names, of *Iſrael*, *Zion*, and the Mountain of the Lord's Houſe, and *Jeruſalem*, and ſuch like Names of the Jewiſh Church. So Chriſt is the King of *Iſrael*, King of *Zion*, and King on God's holy Hill, as he is the King of the Church. As ſuch a King he is foretold, Iſa. 6. 6, 7. *For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the Government ſhall be upon his Shoulder, &c.----Upon the Throne of David, and upon his Kingdom, to order it and to eſtabliſh it with Judgment, and with Juſtice, from henceforth even forever.*---And Jer. 23. 5. 6. *Behold the Days come, ſaith the Lord, that I will raiſe unto David, a righteous Branch, and a King ſhall reign, and proſper, and ſhall execute Judgment, and Juſtice in the Earth. In his Days Judah ſhall be ſaved, and Iſrael ſhall dwell ſafely : And this is his Name whereby he ſhall be called,* THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. Zech. 6. 12. 13. *Behold the Man whoſe Name is the Branch, he ſhall grow up out of his Place, and he ſhall build the Temple of the Lord ; even he ſhall build the Temple of the Lord, and he ſhall bear the Glory, and ſhall ſit and rule upon his Throne, and he ſhall be a Prieſt upon his Throne.*----Of the Church of God, Chriſt is the ſupreme King and Lord. He was indeed ſo in all Ages before his coming in the Fleſh : And he is ſo now of all the People of God in all Places, in all Countries and all Ages in the World. He only has Right to give Laws to them all, Jam. 4. 12. *There is one Law-giver who is able to ſave and to deſtroy.* There is no other King, Law-giver, or ſupreme Ruler in the Church but Chriſt alone. Therefore he has forbid us to call *any Man Maſter, but him,* Mat. 23. 8,9. There is but one Chriſt, Shepherd and Prince in the Church. Ezek. 34. 23, 24. *And I will ſet up one Shepherd over*

over them, and he ſhall feed them, even my Servant David; he ſhall feed them, and he ſhall be their Shepherd, and I the Lord will be their God, and my Servant David a Prince among them. The Church are all profeſſedly governed by his Laws, and united in their Obedience to him, and the Acknowledgement of him as their only ſupreme Lord and Head; and as they are by their ſolemn Profeſſion and Engagement ſubject to his Laws and Government as their Lord and King; they are united under him, by the ſame Bands and Rules, and knit together, under that one Shepherd and King: The Church is his own Peculiar, and there can be no King in it but Chriſt. So that the Chriſtian viſible Church are all that profeſs an entire Subjection to the Laws and Government of Chriſt. And the inviſible Church are all that really and truly are ſubject to him, according to that Profeſſion: Who have no other Lord, who will own no other but Chriſt, and are his Subjects, heartily and ſincerely obedient to him. So that Chriſt is King in all Places and Ages of the World wherever there are any viſible or real Chriſtians; and wherever there are any godly, and holy Men.

3. *Chriſt is King and reigns over all Nations, and all Creatures for his Church.*----Chriſt is King of the Univerſe, not only as God, but as Mediator too. He has the Offices of Prophet, Prieſt and King, and is inveſted with and appointed to all theſe Offices by God. Though 'tis with ſpecial Reſpect to his Church that he is King in this Latitude, and Extent of Authority. It is for the Sake of his Church that he has Authority and Power over all Creatures in Heaven and Earth. God deſigns he ſhall be a compleat Saviour, and be able to execute the whole Deſign of Man's Redemption, and bring all his Redeemed to eternal Glory; for he *muſt reign 'till he hath put all his Enemies under his Feet.* 1 Cor. 15.25. Now to the Accompliſhment of this it is neceſſary that he ſhould have Power to govern and diſpoſe all the Creation; to make all Creatures ſubſervient to the Purpoſes of his Grace, and Redemption. To prevent the Miſchiefs of the Devil, and the Enemies of the Church, and to overrule all their Malice to the promoting his great Deſign; and to make Uſe of all Creatures as he ſees fit to ſerve it and advance this ſpiritual King-

dom

PROPERTY
PRINCETON
REC. JUN 1881
THEOLOGICAL

dom in the Souls of Men, to make them Inſtruments of his Glory in the World in accompliſhing the Deſign of his Undertaking. Therefore is he King over all Things, *Life and Death, Principalities, and Powers, Things preſent, and Things to come.* Theſe are ſo at his Diſpoſe as to be given by him to Believers, and are found in the Inventory of the Saints, 1 *Cor.* 3. 22,23. Chriſt is exalted above all, and made Head over all with this expreſs View and Deſign, *Eph.* 1.20. to the End. *And gave him to be Head over all Things to the Church*: All Hell, and Earth are in Subjection to him, and all the Angels of Heaven. 1 Pet. 3. 22.----*Angels, Authorities and Powers being made ſubject unto him.* Hence the Apoſtle ſays, *God hath made this ſame Jeſus both Lord and Chriſt*, Acts 2. 36. So it was propheciied of him, Pſal. 110. begin. *The Lord ſaid unto my Lord, ſit thou at my Right Hand until I make thine Enemies thy Footſtool.* The Lord ſhall *ſend the Rod of thy Strength out of Zion: Rule thou in the Midſt of thine Enemies.* He is ſaid to have Power to deſtroy *him that had the Power of Death*: i. e. *the Devil*, Heb. 2. 10, 14, 15. *All that make War with him he ſhall overcome*, Rev. 17. 14.

2d. Particular. *To this End Chriſt was born and came into the World, that he might be a King.* That he might be ſuch a King. Our Lord's Anſwer to *Pilate* is, *Thou ſay'ſt that which I am, a King. To this End was I born and for this Cauſe came I into the World.*----Some disjoin the Words in the Text and make them refer to the firſt and laſt Clauſes, after this Manner. I am a King. For this Cauſe was I born, and for this Cauſe came I into the World to bear Witneſs to the Truth. But they are the ſame Thing. Chriſt's being born and coming into the World mean the ſame Thing. And his bearing Witneſs to the Truth is only a Deſcription of the Way whereby he adminiſters his Kingdom, gets Subjects and rules them.

I am now to conſider what is intended by Chriſt's being born, and coming into the World for this End. Now this intends,

1. *That by Birth he was the Heir of David's Houſe, and of Right the King of the Jews.*----It was poſſible and in it ſelf equally ſo that the Son of God might have taken the humane

humane Nature from ſome other Family of *Adam*'s Race, or of *Abraham*'s, than that of *David*; but it was the Will of God he ſhould not, but deſcend from *Abraham*, and *David*; to them the Promiſes were made. Accordingly, by his reputed Father, and real Mother (the Virgin *Mary*) he was of the Houſe and Lineage of *David*, as the Evangeliſt *Matthew* in the 1ſt Chapter, of *Luke* at the 4th has given a particular Account, and traced his Genealogy. Now you ſee *David* was by the expreſs Appointment of God himſelf, the King of the Jews; and God promiſed that he ſhould *never want a Son to ſit upon his Throne; and that there ſhould never fail him a Man to reign after him.* Accordingly, 'tis taken Notice of, that God gave *him the Kingdom by a Covenant of Salt, to him and his Sons forever.* 2 Chron. 13. 5. That is, a perpetual unchanging Covenant. Now there was no Perſon known in the World, who, as to his humane Deſcent, had ſo clear and plain a Challenge and Title to the Throne of *David* as Jeſus Chriſt had. God, who was the King of all Nations, and in a peculiar Manner the King of the Jews, had a Right to entail the Crown, and he had done it on *David's* Race. And Chriſt was the only Heir apparent when he came into the World: And ſo he was born to be a King, as he was born Heir to the Crown and Throne of *David*. And in the Prophecies of him, he is called *the Son of David*, by Way of Emphaſis, and often called *David* himſelf, with Reference to the Promiſe made to *David:* or rather all the Promiſes of *David*'s Reign and Government had Reſpect to this Son of his, as *Iſai.* 9. 7. *Jer.* 23. 5, 6. *Jer.* 33. 17.

2. *This was the Deſign of God in his being born and coming into the World.*

As he was God he had a natural underived Right to govern all Creatures in Heavenand Earth; (as was ſaid before) for he had infinite Perfection, and all the Right of Dominion that could be founded in infinite Fitneſs for that Work; and then he was the Creator of all, and ſo had an unlimited Property in them; and they muſt abſolutely and entirely depend on his Will. Since then God deſigned from all Eternity that his Son ſhould be Mediator between himſelf,

and ſinful fallen Man, and therefore that he ſhould be a King to rule them, to give them Laws, and bring thoſe whom he redeemed to eternal Glory; in Order to his Qualification to this Work and Office, he deſigned him to be born, or to become Man. He deſigned his Incarnation, that he might rule and govern Men, and have a ſupreme mediatorial Authority over them. For this End he ſent him to be born, or become Incarnate. Iſai. 55. 4. *Behold, I have given him for a Witneſs to the People, a Leader and Commander to the People.*

3. *It was neceſſary that he ſhould be born, and come into the World, that he might be a King.*

You know there was no Neceſſity of this in Order to his having the ſupreme Dominion he had as God, over all the Creation; but in Order to his being a King as he ſpeaks himſelf to be, and having ſuch a Kingdom as he has as Mediator.

This Neceſſity is of two Sorts,

1. *It was neceſſary to the Salvation of Man.*

There was indeed no ſimple abſolute Neceſſity that fallen Man ſhould have been ſaved at all: God was not bound to ſave him: But having in his own good Pleaſure reſolved to do it, it was neceſſary that Man ſhould have a Saviour, that the Law might be fulfilled, and Man might be ſubdued to his Maker, governed and kept in Obedience to him; and that the Enemies of his Salvation might be ſubdued, and not able to hinder it. Therefore as there was a Neceſſity of a Mediator between God and Man, and no other Perſon but Jeſus Chriſt was capable of it, it was neceſſary that he ſhould be born; for if he had not been Man as well as God, he could not have been a ſuitable Mediator; he could not *have laid his Hand upon us both*.-----And all the Offices of Chriſt were neceſſary for Performance of the Work God deſigned him for and which he had undertaken. It was not enough for him to be a Prieſt and a Prophet. We needed indeed Satisfaction to be made for Sin, and perfect Obedience to be paid to the Law; we needed alſo to be taught the Will of God, and renewed to the right Knowledge of him: But moreover, we needed to be bowed and ſubdued

to

to the Will of God, to be protected and defended from our ſpiritual and mighty Enemies, and brought finally to Heaven. And this we could not be by Chriſt if he had not been a King; ſuch a King as he was born to be: ſo that it was neceſſary that he ſhould be born, become Incarnate, or come into the World, that he might be a King, i. e. That he might be qualified for that Office, and capable to adminiſter it, which was neceſſary for us, if we were redeemed. He could not have been a Mediator if he had not been born, and therefore not a King in his mediatorial Office. 'Tis true, he adminiſtred this Office before he did come into the World; but it was upon the Credit, the Deſign, and Promiſe of his Coming; and God who ſees Things which are not as tho' they were, ſaw him born and become Man in his own Will and Decree.

2. *It was neceſſary, as there was a Meetneſs, Fitneſs or Congruity in his being a King, and his being born, that he might be ſo.*

There was a Meetneſs that the Son of God ſhould be like himſelf, and that the Nature he aſſumed into a perſonal Relation to the divine Nature, ſhould be as highly exalted as it was capable of, and bear as near a Reſemblance to his other Nature as a created Being could have. So it was meet that he who was to be the King of the Church, ſhould be born, that he might take the ſame Nature with his Subjects, that he ſhould be of the ſame Stock, and derived from the common Root, that he might be a gracious and faithful King, as well as a merciful, and faithful High Prieſt. It was meet that in our Nature he ſhould be exalted above all created Power; that he might be able to recover and raiſe that Nature to the Image of God, and in it ſubdue all the Enemies of our Happineſs: This is agreeable to the Apoſtle's Reaſoning, Heb. 2. 14, &c. *Foraſmuch then as the Children are Partakers of Fleſh and Blood, he alſo himſelf likewiſe took Part of the ſame,* &c.

USE 1. *This Doctrine takes off the Scandal of the Humiliation and Meanneſs of Chriſt's Appearance in the World.*

One Reaſon of the Jews Hatred and Rejection of Chriſt was the Meanneſs of his Appearance in the World; they look'd for a Meſſiah who would appear in this World as a mighty Prince, in the Pomp, and Glories of this World, and reſcue them from the Subjection they were under to the Roman Government, and put them into a State of great temporal and outward Proſperity. But Chriſt gave no Proſpect, or Promiſes of any ſuch Thing. He was born of a poor Family (though of the royal Stock of *David*) brought up in a mean City, lived to Appearance a low Life, and his Followers were of the meaner Sort of People. The Jews would not have him to reign over them. He *was deſpiſed and rejected of Men*, as *Iſaiah* foretold Ch. 53. 2, 3. He was Fooliſhneſs to the Gentiles, who laughed at the Chriſtian's Saviour, and derided a crucified God. But his Diſciples who knew better always gloried in the Meanneſs of his Appearance in the World, never deſired to hide it, but took all Occaſions to ſpeak of it, and were exact in the Mention of all the Circumſtances of it as this Evangeliſt is in this Chapter. They knew how the Scandal of his Croſs was taken off, and were not aſhamed of it. And this Conſideration among others, takes away the Scandal of it; that he was born to be a King, and ſo glorious in the Honours of his Office, and able to perform all his Undertaking. Let Jews and Gentiles, Deiſts and Infidels, deride and mock our Bleſſed, our incarnate Lord and Saviour. He was indeed born, and born in the Form of a Servant, rejected, ſcorned and tried at the Bar of a Roman Governour, and crucified; yet he was born to be a King, and the moſt glorious King that ever was born; he was born to reign on the Throne of *David* for ever, to eſtabliſh and order his Kingdom. In the meaneſt of his Appearance on Earth, he was the true Heir of a long Race of the beſt Kings that ever were in the World, an Houſe of God's ſpecial immediate Appointment and Building, and he himſelf was the Perſon of whom they were the Types and Shadows. He was moreover, the eternal Son of God, myſteriouſly and wonderfully united to the Nature of Man in the Son of *David*. He is the only Mediator between God and Man. In his loweſt Humiliation he was

was inveſted with all his Offices, and then a King, who could command all the Angels of Heaven, the Powers of Earth, and the Deeps of Hell; he then reigned in the Hearts of all good Men in the World. Yea he was then conquering the Powers of Hell, and preparing to lead them in Chains through the Air in his Aſſent to Heaven, which was ſhortly after. Let Chriſtians glory in this King and Saviour, *and know aſſuredly that God hath made this ſame Jeſus both Lord and Chriſt.*

2. *This gives us a wonderful and admirable View of the Humiliation of Chriſt.*

For a mean Perſon to be treated in a ſcandalous and abuſive Manner, is very affecting to human Nature, and eaſily excites the Paſſions of Pity, Compaſſion, and Indignation. But when we ſee a King, a Perſon of the moſt exalted Character, abaſed and abuſed, treated with Contempt and Scorn, inſulted, trampled on, and ſet at Nought, it is much more apt to affect our Minds. But we can never view ſuch another Inſtance as that of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who was born in a Stable, laid in a Manger, becauſe a bluſtering and huffing Rabble had fill'd the Inn, and there was no Room there for the King of Heaven and Earth. To view him early expoſed to the jealous Rage of *Herod*, and carried in the Arms of his Parents into *Egypt*, to eſcape his Fury; and when he came back, labouring in the Trade of a Carpenter to get a Livelihood: when grown up, not to have an Houſe to lay his Head in; rejected by his own Nation, and the chief Prieſts, the Scribes and topping Men of his own Nation, treated as the worſt of Malefactors, brought before a Roman Governour, and there Judgment of Death demanded againſt him, and a noted Robber, Rioter and Murderer preferred before him; and yet this very Perſon was born Heir of the Crown of *David*, was the rightful Ruler of *Iſrael*, and was King of Heaven; by him the Worlds were made, and upheld, and governed at his Pleaſure;--What a Sight was this?---To ſee the Creator of all Worlds, the Lord of infinite Glory inſulted, ſpit on, ſmitten on the Head by an infamous and raſcally Rabble; abuſed by a Parcel of Prieſts, who pretended to be his Father's Miniſters; to

ſee

ſee the Lord of Angels and Men, brought to the Bar of a haughty Roman Governour, and there inſulted by him, Ch. 19. Ver. 10. *Speakeſt thou not to me*, &c. Such a Man as I am; boaſting of his mighty Power, as if it was nothing inferior to *Nebuchadnezzar*'s of whom 'tis ſaid, that *whom he would he ſlew, and whom he would he kept alive*: He reflects on him as if he were undutiful and diſreſpectful, ungrateful, and unwiſe for himſelf; while the Son of God with amazing Humility, and Meekneſs, lets him know that all his Power againſt him was given him from above, and he had no more for all his big Looks, than the determinate Counſel of God gave him.---Oh! with what affectionate and aſtoniſhing Wonder ſhould we look on! And in this Chapter, V. 35. *Pilate* reſents the Anſwer of Chriſt, and takes it very heinouſly. Chriſt had asked him, whether he ſpeaks of himſelf? "What ſays *Pilate*, *Am I a Jew?* I intereſt "not myſelf in the Diſpute about the Meſſiah; who is or "who is not 'tis all alike to me." Chriſt had asked him, *Whether others had told him*? "Yes, ſays he, thine own "Nation and the Prieſts whoſe Word (*in Verbum Sacerdotis*) "ought to be regarded are thine Accuſers; nay, have de- "livered thee unto me: What haſt thou done?"

And yet this very Perſon as God, and as Mediator was King and Lord of this *Pilate*, this People, and theſe Prieſts, and had Power in a Moment to have ſent them to Hell. He could with a Nod have called down all the Angels of Heaven to reſcue him, or to have executed his Will: But behold, ſuch a King as never was on Earth before, ſuch an one as all Creatures in Heaven adore, in this State of Inſult and Abuſe: Behold, and wonder at, admire and adore a Condeſcenſion which never can be matched by Earth or Heaven! ----

3. *This affords abundant Encouragement and Support to true Chriſtians.*

God has provided in Chriſt a Fulneſs of all Wiſdom, Strength, Riches, Power and Comfort, to be beſtowed on them, according to all their ſeveral Exigencies and Wants at all Times: Your Condition can never be ſuch but that Chriſt has Riches and Grace treaſured up in him to be anſwerable for it. *In him dwelleth all the Fulneſs of the Godhead bodily.*

bodily. All the Stores of the infinite Riches and Power of God are depoſited with him, for the Good of his People and ſupply of their Wants, as there is Occaſion. And in the kingly Office of Chriſt there is abundant Encouragement and Support for his true Diſciples.

1. *Under the Burdens and Complaints of their own Sinfulneſs, Stubbornneſs and Hardneſs of Heart.*

Theſe are Complaints which pious Souls will often make, and they have great Reaſon to make them. There is Abundance of remaining Perverſeneſs in the Minds of godly People, a Body of Sin remaining, and a corrupt Principle in them warring againſt the Will of God and Law of Chriſt. Sometimes they find the fearful Workings of Pride, and Self-ſufficiency; ſometimes they are groaning under Impatience, Unſubmiſſiveneſs to the divine Will, and an unſubdued Heart; ſometimes are amazed at their own Stupidity, Unaffectedneſs with the Wonders of infinite Grace and Love and Pity, and Inſenſibility of the Rebukes and Judgments of God's Providence, and cry out, as the great Apoſtle; *O! wretched Man that I am*: Rom. 7. 24. As Perſons deeply ſenſible of their own Perverſeneſs and the Warring of their Corruptions againſt the Spirit and Law of Chriſt.

They are ready to be diſcouraged under the Burdens of an evil, hard, proud, unbelieving Heart. Now here is Support and Encouragement for you, O burdened and weary Soul, labouring under this heavy Load, and ſtruggling with this tireſome Warfare. Jeſus Chriſt was born and came into the World to be a King. And he is King of his Church, and over all Things for his Church. He is able to ſubdue your Hearts, to overcome your Luſts, to beat down your Pride, to conquer all the Oppoſition of your Souls to the Will of God, to bring you all into Obedience to his Will, and to keep you through Faith unto Salvation. He is King of Souls, he is the Lord of Hearts; there he lives and reigns and ſets up his Throne: Look to him as your Lord and your King, truſt in his Power, and Wiſdom, and Faithfulneſs, to ſubdue and bow your Hearts to his Will, to conquer and overcome all your Rebellion, and triumph over your Unbelief, and the Wickedneſs and Corruption of your Natures. The Sinfulneſs and Perverſeneſs, the Pride and

Corruption

Corruption of your Hearts ſhould make you mourn ; but you need not be diſcouraged, for Chriſt reigns, and lives for ever, to conquer Sin, to ſubdue Souls, to gain and preſerve Subjects, to make and keep them obedient to his Will. Do but look and reſt by Faith upon the Strength and Power and Wiſdom of that glorious King, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt : There devolve your Burdens, and you may cry out with the Apoſtle, Rom. 7. ult. *I thank God thro' Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.*

2. *Under the Burdens and Dangers of your Enemies.*

The People of God will have a great many Enemies as long as they live. Their Maſter had; and they muſt follow him. *'Tis enough for the Diſciple that he be as his Maſter.* Chriſt told his Diſciples, they muſt meet with Tribulation in this World ; and they find it ſo. They have many outward Enemies; the World often laughs at them, deſpiſes and abuſes them, as it did their Maſter. They, are oftentimes hard beſet with the Frowns of that, to get along. They are beſet by Satan, the Enemy of Souls, *who goes about like a roaring Lion, ſeeking whom he may devour.* They are beſet by many Temptations and Dangers, and their corrupt Hearts give great Advantage to them : *Without are Fightings, and within are Fears.* You are ready to ſay as *David, I ſhall one Day periſh by the Hand of Saul.* And almoſt as the Spies who were ſent to view the Land of *Canaan*, Numb. 13. 33. *And there we ſaw the Giants, the Sons of Anak, which came of the Giants, and we were in our own Sight as Graſhoppers, and ſo we were in their Sight.* However, be not diſcouraged, neither be faint, or weary, only believe on the Lord Jeſus ; remember he is a glorious King. He came into the World for this End that he might be a King, and he reigns forever; *Angels Authorities, and Powers, are made ſubject to him* ; all the Powers of Earth and Hell are under his Command, and he will reign 'till he has ſubdued all his Enemies, *and henceforth expects 'till it be done*, Heb. 10. 12, 13. He that is with you is ſtronger than all that be againſt you. If you truſt to yourſelves you will be eaſily overcome; but if you look to your Lord and King, and fight under his Banner, you have no Reaſon to be at all diſcouraged; *the Lamb will overcome all that make War with him.*

4. USE.

4. USE. This Doctrine *administers Terror to the Enemies of Christ.* Not only *Herod*, the Priests, the Jews, and *Pontius Pilate* must tremble when they shall *see the Son of Man coming in the Clouds of Heaven*, arrayed in the Royal Robes of his celestial Glory; but all his other Enemies must tremble too. If Christ is a King, his Enemies will not triumph for ever. The Time is coming when he will give that Order, Luke 19. 27. *But those mine Enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.* Oh! that they might tremble now, *and kiss the Son lest he be angry, and they perish from the Way.*

1. *Such as wilfully oppose the Government of Christ.* Such as are all Atheists, Deists, Blasphemers of Christ. and of his Gospel; all open Contemners of Religion and the Laws and Authority of the Son of God; all such as inwardly, and secretly hate the Laws of Christ and his Government, and the Prosperity of his Kingdom, tho' they may be restrained from outward and open Blasphemies by Fears of humane Punishments, or for Shame, or by any other outward Restraints; yet all such are wilful Opposers of the Kingly Office and Authority of Christ in their own Hearts, and in the Hearts of others. Now if Christ was born to be a King, and is, and will be such, then Wo, Wo, Wo, will be unto all such his Enemies! He patiently endures the Enemies of his Name and Glory now; but the Time is coming when he will vindicate his Honour and manifest the Truth of his being a King, and that God hath set him upon his holy Hill of *Zion*, and anointed him to reign for ever. He will subdue his Enemies either under the Sceptre of his Grace, or by a Rod of Iron.

2. *Such as carelesly disregard his Truth and Glory now, and practically refuse Obedience to him.* These are the more common Enemies of Christ: While they don't think themselves so, they live in Rebellion against him, and Opposition to his Laws and Will.---Christ calls you by his Word, and by his Spirit; by his Providence, and all the visible Works of the Administration of his Kingdom; and ye will not obey; but live in a careless Neglect of your Duty to him, though he is a King who has just and sovereign Right to demand absolute and unreserved Obedience. You are regardless of his

Authority, and practically refuse to have him to reign over you. He calls you to Faith and Repentance, and an immediate entire Submission to his Terms of your Salvation; and you live in a practical Contempt of his Commands, unconcern'd about the miserable Condition you are in, the Enmity of your Hearts against him, the Corruption and woful Depravity of a State of unrenewed Nature. Multitudes there are who hold themselves very good Friends of the Lord Jesus Christ because they don't clamour against him as the Jews and chief Priests did, nor treat him as *Pilate* and the Soldiers did. But you must know, that there is no Man, who is not either a true Subject of Christ or his Enemy. That Man who don't submit to Christ as his King and Lord by bearing true Faith and Allegiance to him, is the Enemy of Christ and his Kingdom. Such are all who will not depend on him, believe in him, give up themselves & all to him; all unbelieving, impenitent, careless Sinners; to them may be said what Christ said to his Disciples concerning them, Mat. 24. 30.---*Then shall all the Tribes of the Earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the Clouds of Heaven, with Power, and great Glory.*

5 USE of Examination, *Whether you are the Subjects of Christ.* There are great Numbers of Men who pass for Christians, and true Subjects of Christ, who are his Enemies. Many have a Form of Christianity, the Name, and visible Profession of Christians; who are visible Subjects of Christ, but secret Enemies and Traytors to their Lord. Content not yourselves with such a feigned and hypocritical Subjection to him, but see to it that you are true, and hearty Subjects, to this only Saviour and King whom God has appointed to rule his Church, and the World for their Sakes.

For your Trial under this Head enquire,----

1. *Whether you take Christ as your only Lawgiver and Lord of your Consciences.----There is one Law-giver who is able to save and destroy,* Jam. 4. 12. Now you must see to it that you have no other but he. That all your Religion, your Worship and the Service you offer to God, is done according to the Will of Christ: In this you may call no Man Master, for one is your Master, even Christ. You must have no Laws of your

your Religion but those which Christ gives you: If you have, therein Men, or your Lusts, are your King, and not Christ. *To whomsoever ye yield yourselves to obey, his Servants ye are*, Rom. 6. 16. Just so far as your Religion or Devotion is paid from any other Consideration than the Will and Pleasure of God and of Christ, and out of Love to him and his Laws, just so far are you from being a real Subject of Christ.

2. *Do you depend on Christ only to save you, to secure and protect you* ? It may be you think you depend on no other Saviour, and that contents you; tho' you can't depend on Christ neither, and so have nothing to trust to. You must depend all on Christ for your Salvation, and trust to him alone to be your Restorer from Sin, as well as Deliverer from Hell; you must not have any Dependance on your own Power, Wisdom, Strength, no nor to your Grace to help you; so far you would be Kings and Saviours to yourselves: And Christ will not share the Honours of your Redemption with you. He is too great a King to be made a Partner with you in the Work and Glory of your Salvation. Again; Do you depend on him to protect you from all your spiritual Enemies, to restore you to Holiness, to subdue all your Hearts to the Will of God, and make you Partakers of his Image, and moral Perfections, and in that to preserve and lead you to your true Perfection and eternal Happiness ? If you do, you are the Subjects of Christ: But if you are seeking to, or trusting in your own Duties or Virtues to bring you to it, you are the Subjects of your own Pride, and of Satan; you are not in the Road to Heaven, but in the Way to Hell.

3. *Do you make it your Business, and account it your greatest Pleasure to honour and obey Christ* ? If Christ be your King you love him, and you love his Laws, and his Will, and count it not only your Duty, but your Happiness to please him. Do you count that you have no other Business to do but to do the Will of Christ and to please him; that this is the best Service you can be employed in, the greatest Glory, and Happiness of your Life ? Do you desire and aim at this as your chief Joy to be conformed to his Image and Will, to serve him, and honour him ? Do you pay your Worship and Service to him from Love to him, his Kingdom and his Laws ? If so, then

you are his Subjects: 'Tis ſaid, that his *People ſhall be willing*, or Volunteers, *in the Day of his Power*, Pſa. 110. 3. If Chriſt has thus made you his Subjects, then his kingly Power has ſubdued you.

4. *Does Chriſt rule in your Heart and Actions, and in the ſeveral Relations of your Lives?* Chriſt, as a King, has a Right to command you in all. Now perhaps you think you find a Willingneſs to ſubmit to Chriſt in ſome Things, in ſome Relations of your Lives: but are you willing in all the ſeveral Relations you are in, as a Father, a Child, an Husband, a Wife, a Maſter, a Servant, a Friend, a Ruler, a Subject? Chriſt muſt reign in all Relations; in one as well as another: You muſt ſee if in each Relation you do the Duties of thoſe Relations as unto Chriſt; i. e. If Chriſt be there, and you do them out of Obedience and Love to Chriſt as your King; then you are his Subjects and belong to his Kingdom: But if you do them not at all; or do them not out of Conſcience of the Will of Chriſt, and Love and Obedience to him, he is not your King.

SERMON II.

CHRIST's Witneſs to the Truth.

DOCTRINE II.

CHRIST came into the World to bear Witneſs to the Truth.

OUR LORD having aſſerted, that he was a King, that he was born for that End, and came into the World or became incarnate for this Purpoſe, goes on in his Anſwer to *Pilate* to explain himſelf, and ſhow, how he is a King. This King came into the World to bear Witneſs to the Truth.

He

He did not come to conquer Kings, and diſpoſſeſs them of their Thrones; to impoſe Taxes, raiſe Armies, levy Contributions, and fight with Men. No! he came to be a Witneſs for the Truth; a Witneſs for the God that made the World: and by this, as you may afterwards hear, he ſets up and maintains his Kingdom: It was foretold that he ſhould be *a Witneſs to the People, and as ſuch, a Leader and Commander to them*, Iſa. 55. 4.----In diſcourſing on this Doctrine I ſhall conſider,

1. *What is that Truth, or what are thoſe Truths, which Chriſt came to bear Witneſs to.*
2. *How his Coming bears Witneſs to them.*

1. *What is that Truth, or what are thoſe Truths, which Chriſt came to bear Witneſs to.*

Now Chriſt came to bear Witneſs in ſome Way to all divine Truths; to all the Truths of natural and revealed Religion; to all the Truths of Religion which God has made known to Men. But what is needful to be ſaid, may be comprehended under the following Heads, viz.

1. *He came to bear Witneſs, that Sin was infinitely hateful to God, and had ruined the World.*

Chriſt's Coming was the cleareſt Teſtimony againſt Sin that ever was given. The eternal Son of God would never have become Incarnate, and came into the World to deliver Men from Sin in the Way he did, if Sin had not been infinitely hateful to GOD. If GOD could have connived at it, or lightly paſs'd it by, Chriſt had not ſo come into the World. Sure it was no ſmall Matter that could move the eternal Son of GOD to become Incarnate, to appear in the Form of Man, to become obedient to Death, to undergo all the Shame and Ignominy, the Suffering and Reproach which he did endure; the Shame of an infamous Trial before Men, the Malice of the Enemies of GOD, the Miſery, and Scandal of the Croſs. For the moſt High GOD to have ſuffered his own Son to be treated in ſuch a Manner for a Trifle, or on the Account of a Thing below infinite Moment and Importance, would have been utterly unbecoming

the

the Holineſs and Wiſdom of that divine and glorious Being. Chriſt came, as the Scripture abundantly declares, to redeem us from Sin; to ſatisfy the Anger of God for it; and to bear the Curſe, or Puniſhment which Sin had brought upon Man. Now this all witneſſes in the cleareſt Manner that Sin had brought utter Ruin on the World; that by Sin Man had utterly deſtroy'd himſelf, and muſt have been eternally undone if the Son of God had not undertaken the Work of Redemption. It is the moſt powerful Evidence that ever was given that Sin was infinitely hateful to God. For it was an evidence that God would not forgive Sin, nor ſave any of the Sons of *Adam* without a Satisfaction for it; which Satisfaction muſt be infinite in the Excellency and Value and Vertue of it. Tho' the Heart of God was ſet upon the Recovery of this ruined World, and he was Reſolved to ſave and recover many of the loſt Race of *Adam*, yet ſuch an Evil ſtood in the way, as made it unfit for him to do it without ſuch a Satisfaction as the Son of God muſt make, in bearing the Shame and Pains due for Sin, and undergoing the Curſe and Wrath of God for it. That a God of infinite Wiſdom and Mercy ſhould thus exact a Satisfaction from his own dear, eternal Son, in order to the Remiſſion of Sin, and the Salvation of the Sinner, was ſuch an Evidence of the Malignity, and curſed Nature of Sin, and of God's infinite inexorable Hatred of it, as never was given or could be given any other Way. The Sufferings of all Sinners to all Eternity would not have been ſo ſtrong an Evidence of God's infinite Hatred of Sin, and the deadly Nature of it.--- Now this is an everlaſting Truth, that Sin is infinitely hateful to God; it is contrary to his Nature and Will; it is a Denial of the infinite unchangeable Purity, Truth, Wiſdom, Power, Juſtice and Goodneſs of God; a Rejection of his Authority, a deſpiſing and trampling on his Laws. And as God muſt infinitely love himſelf, he muſt infinitely and unchangeably hate Sin. And as Man's Happineſs can only lie in his Likeneſs to God, in Union to, and Communion with him, Sin had broke off that Union, and ſo eternally undone and ruined Man. At the ſame Time Man knew not his Wretchedneſs; and while the World lay in

Ruins

Ruins it knew not its Miſery, but was content with, and in that dreadful Separation from God. And Chriſt gave the cleareſt Teſtimony to this Truth.

2. *Chriſt came to bear Witneſs to the Holineſs of the Law, and the Covenant of Works made with Man.*

God gave Man a Law at firſt, a natural Law impreſs'd on his Heart and Conſcience, reſulting from the Nature of God, and Man's Relation to him; and this Law was given him in the Form of a Covenant of Life: The Trial of his Obedience, his Confirmation and Happineſs, was, His not eating of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Now Man broke this Covenant; ſinn'd againſt the Law: this was an infinite Reproach caſt upon the Law, and the Covenant which God had given Man; a taxing of the Law of God with Unholineſs, a reproaching him as though he had been unjuſt and unkind in the Reſtraints he had laid upon Man, and not good enough to him in the Covenant he made with him.---- Now Chriſt's coming into the World for the End he did, and his Works, Obedience and Suffering, were the cleareſt Witneſſes to the Holineſs of that Law and Covenant, and of God's inflexible Adherence to his own Conſtitution: For the Obedience which Chriſt paid to the Law was an Obedience of the Son of God in our Nature, and ſo it put the higheſt Honour upon the Law that could be put upon it. It was ſuch a Fulfilment of the Covenant of Works as paid a greater Honour to it than *Adam's* Obedience to it would have done. The Sufferings of Chriſt were the Sufferings of the Son of God in our Nature, and were a Satisfaction for the Sin of Man, and for the Tranſgreſſion of the Covenant of Works. This was ſuch a Satisfaction as all Creatures in the World could not have made; the Suffering of all Sinners in Hell are not of equal Value.---- In the Obedience of Chriſt the Law was perfectly obeyed; in his Sufferings, the Penalty for Man's Sins, and the Breach of the firſt Covenant, perfectly and compleatly ſuffered; which never could have been by Man, for he muſt have ſuffered eternally. Therein God has magnified the Law, and made it honourable. He has ſhewn his inviolable Adherence to the Law and Covenant he gave Men at firſt;

and

and that in Man's Recovery and Salvation he loſes nothing of his Authority, nor abates the Obligation of his Law and Covenant, but this is inviolably obſerved, and God's acts exactly agreeable to it, though he ſaves the Breakers of it.

To this the Coming of Chriſt, and his Obedience and Sufferings give the cleareſt Witneſs.

3. *Chriſt came to bear Witneſs to the infinite Perfections of GOD.*

Theſe are the original, uncreated, eternal Truths, on which all other Truths are founded, and from whence they ſpring. The eternal Power and God-head, the neceſſary Exiſtence and Perfections of God are, as the Apoſtle tells us, *Manifeſted from the Things which are ſeen*, Rom. 1. 20. However, Chriſt gave the cleareſt Evidence, or Atteſtation, to thoſe original, neceſſary, eternal and unchangeable Truths, that was ever manifeſted to the World; that God made the World; that he governs it; and that he is infinite in all Perfection, that is poſſible for him to poſſeſs. But there are ſome Particulars wherein a more illuſtrious Manner this Witneſs is given by Chriſt.

1. *Chriſt bears Witneſs to the Truth and Faithfulneſs of GOD.*

What greater Evidence could be given of this than the Life, and Death, and Sufferings of Chriſt? Herein it appears that God is unvariably true and conſtant to the Threatning of his Law; he would never change, or vary from what had gone out of his Mouth. He had ſaid, that Death ſhould be the Conſequence of *Adam*'s Sin. And Chriſt ſhow'd that nothing ſhould ever alter him or make him vary from the Threatning of the Law: That he would be true to himſelf, to his own Honour, and Faithfulneſs, *and cannot deny himſelf*, as 2 Tim. 2. 13. He would abide faithful to his Word, though it muſt coſt the Sufferings and Death of his own Son. He would not recede a little from his Word, nor abate any Thing of the Rigour and Holineſs of his Law, though it came to the greateſt Expence he could be at to have it fulfilled, and muſt require the Death and Blood of his Son, as Man's Surety, and in his Stead. Chriſt gave from his Mouth the cleareſt Teſtimony to this, and the plaineſt Declaration, that God was Truth itſelf,

itſelf, that his Nature and Being was Truth; that his *Eſſence was Light*; *that it is eaſier for Heaven and Earth to paſs away, than for God to vary a Tittle from his Word*, Mat. 5. 18. By the Coming of Chriſt it appeared that God's Promiſes were unchangeably firm and ſtable; that it was impoſſible for God to lie; that all which Heaven and Earth could do ſhould be done rather than any Appearance of Deceit, Falſhood or Unfaithfulneſs ſhould be found in God.

2. *Chriſt bore Witneſs to the inexorable Juſtice and Righteouſneſs of God.*

Man had ſinn'd; he had fallen from God & his own Happineſs. He needed Mercy from God. He muſt periſh forever, and the World ſink in Ruins, if God did not ſhew him Mercy: But though God is infinite in Mercy, his Mercy is natural to him, and infinitely free, and diſpoſed to ſhew Mercy to miſerable Creatures, yet he would not do it 'till his Juſtice was perfectly ſatisfied, and he could do it with Righteouſneſs and Equity, and without any Stain or Blemiſh to his Juſtice. He would abate nothing that ſtrict, impartial, and infinite Juſtice required. Now herein Chriſt came to bear Witneſs to the Reality of immutable Juſtice and Righteouſneſs in God. For he is an Evidence that nothing could change, or alter theſe Attributes of the divine Nature, that God is unchangeable Righteouſneſs and Juſtice. Chriſt has given the cleareſt Atteſtation, that can be given, to the inflexible Nature of divine Juſtice. When God ſaid, *Awake, O Sword, againſt the Man that is my Fellow:* When the Son of God was made a Victim of divine Juſtice, it appear'd that nothing could ever move God to be unjuſt, or pervert Judgment. He could do more than make all Worlds a Sacrifice to the Rights and Claims of Juſtice, rather than ſuffer them to be violated or ſet aſide. He ſhow'd, that *he is a God of Truth, and without Iniquity*, that *juſt and right is he.* Deut. 32. 4.

3. *Chriſt came to bear Witneſs to the infinite Love and Mercy of God.*

God is infinite in Mercy, and his Goodneſs and Love are boundleſs as his Eſſence. *He is glorious in Mercy as well as Holineſs.* All the Angels and happy Creatures above are

innumerable and unceaſing Witneſſes of his Love; all Sinners that are renewed and ſaved are the Monuments of his Mercy. He has Millions, and numberleſs Millions of Evidences of his vaſt and boundleſs Benignity in the World. But of all the Evidences of it there are none like Chriſt: There can be no ſuch Witneſs of the divine Love, as the *Philanthropy*, or Love of God to Man made manifeſt in Chriſt. This witneſſes the Eternity, the Unlimitedneſs, and Endleſſneſs of that Love. Chriſt had never come into the World, if God had not been willing to ſave Sinners; if he had not from all Eternity ſaved them, and reſolved to ſhew his Love, and manifeſt the Riches of his Mercy to them. God had ſuch a Love of Pity, and Compaſſion to them, as to overcome all the Difficulties that were in the Way of their Salvation, and to give the greateſt Gift in Heaven or Earth, the greateſt Argument of his Love that could ever be ſhown. We find that when Sinners come to have ſome juſt Apprehenſions of the deadly Malignity of Sin, and its curſed Oppoſition to the Nature and Image of God, its horrid Perverſeneſs in defying the Authority, Power, Holineſs and Juſtice of God; when they come to ſee what Creatures they are, how unlike to God, how utterly unfit for Communion with him, and how infinitely they have ſwerved from his Will, and Law, what an impure Nature, perverſe Temper and Diſpoſition they have, it is exceeding hard to perſwade them that a righteous, juſt, pure and holy God can ever find in his Heart to love ſuch Creatures. They can't think it poſſible that ſuch a Being could ever deſign Mercy for ſuch as them; ſuch Monſters of Sin, Ingratitude, Rebellion, and all that can be unholy and perverſe. But Chriſt has born uncontrolable Witneſs to this Truth: For if God could not have pitied them, and had Mercy on them, he never could have conſented that his Son ſhould die for them: If he had not loved them, he never would have ſent his only Son into the World to have taken the human Nature, and to ſuffer, inſtead of curſed and loſt Creatures, the ſevereſt Puniſhment that Juſtice required. If God had not had as much Mercy as all the Sinners in the World needed, he would not have given his only

only and eternal Son as a Ranſom. This was a Gift greater than all Worlds. If he had given all the Angels in Heaven, and all the Creatures that he had made, it would not have given ſuch irrefragable Teſtimony of his infinite Love and Mercy, as the Gift of his only and eternal Son, to ſave ſuch a World. Hence when our Saviour ſpeaks of it, he does it with ſuch an Emphaſis as is above and beyond Compariſon, Joh. 3. 16. *God ſo loved the World*, &c. He ſo loved it as is beyond all Parallel; ſo that he expreſs'd the greateſt Love he could expreſs towards it. For *he gave his only begotten Son*: He had nothing greater to give; nothing he could ſo much expreſs his Love by. He could have made numberleſs Worlds, and have given them; but all that he could have made could not be ſo great and good and dear to him as his only Son. Since God could give him for the Salvation of Sinners, it proves his Mercy to be infinite, and boundleſs. No Manfeſtation of Love or Mercy can go beyond or be a Match for this. So the Apoſtle argues, *Rom.* 8. 32. *He that ſpared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how ſhall he not with him alſo freely give us all Things?*

4. *Chriſt came to bear Witneſs to the Wiſdom, and Power of God.*

Theſe divine Attributes do moſt glorioufly ſhine forth by Chriſt's coming into the World, and our Redemption by him. The Contrivance of this wonderful Scheme is beyond the Wiſdom of all Creatures. The eternal Son of God becomes incarnate; the ſecond *Adam*, and Man's Surety, fulfils the Covenant of Works, which the firſt *Adam* broke; anſwer'd the Penalty of the Law, and ſatisfied for our Sin; bore the Curſe which we had deſerved; anſwered all the Demands of Juſtice and the Law for Sin; fulfill'd all the Righteouſneſs of the Law, and gave infinite Honour to it; put an Honour upon it above what the perſonal Obedience of *Adam* would have done, or which would have been given by *Adam's* Fulfilment of the Covenant of Works; by him compleat Salvation is purchaſed, and provided for Sinners; this was a Myſtery above all the Comprehenſion of Angels or Men. In this appears to be an unfathomable Reach of divine Wiſ-

dom, in finding out a Way that ſeem'd to look ſo contrary to all the Probabilities of human Reaſon. The Son of God was made Man, in the Form of a Servant: Infinite Strength appeared in the Weakneſs of Fleſh and Blood: The Creator, and Lord, and Judge of the World, ſtood at the Bar of *Pontius Pilate*, was ſentenced to Death, ſcourged, reviled, ſpit on, crucified as a Malefactor. This Scheme that was beſide all the Imagination and Thoughts of Men, and ſeemed moſt oppoſite to the Glory of God, and contrary to the Deſign of it, either in God's Honour, or Man's Salvation; was the Wiſdom of God, and the Power of God. When Angels were non-pluſs'd, Devils triumph'd, and Men laughed at a crucified God, the Power and Wiſdom of God appeared infinite; and he ſhowed that it was infinitely eaſy for him to out-reach all the Power, Malice & Craft of Hell & Earth, when he could accompliſh the vaſteſt Deſigns of his eternal Counſels by ways that look'd to the World as if they were contrary to them. God hath abounded towards us in all Wiſdom and Prudence, both in the Way of our Redemption and all the Parts of its Application. 1 *Cor.* 1. 23, 24. *But we preach Chriſt crucified, unto the Jews a Stumbling Block, and unto the Greeks Fooliſhneſs; but unto them which are called, Chriſt the Power of God, and the Wiſdom of God.*

5. *Chriſt came to bear Witneſs to the Harmony and Agreement of the divine Attributes, or the Simplicity of the divine Nature.* In Chriſt they are all united in the moſt glorious Manner; as the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks, Pſal. 85. 10, &c. *Mercy and Truth are met together, Righteouſneſs and Peace have kiſſed each other.* In Chriſt, a God of infinite, inflexible Juſtice, of ſpotleſs, and abſolute Purity and Holineſs, ſhews infinite Mercy to poor, loſt, curſed Sinners. When Mercy ſhines and triumphs in infinite Grace and Glory; when Love ſtoops down even to the Deeps of Hell to fetch Rebels to Heaven; ſevere and awful Juſtice and abſolute Holineſs ſit on the Throne of Glory, and triumph in infinite Honour; Power, and Sovereignty keep their Place and Rank, and appear in all the Glory that becomes the tranſcendant Majeſty of God: When Holineſs, Juſtice and Righteouſneſs, are diſplayed

played in the greateſt Glory, even then God appears to be infinite Love & Pity. The greateſt Tenderneſs, Compaſſion and Mercy, reign eternally: Mercy takes its full Scope, & infinitely rejoices in its moſt full and compleat Exerciſe, in making the moſt wretched ſelf-ruined and miſerable Creatures, the Favourites and Darlings of Heaven, the Objects of the Complacency and tendereſt Love of the moſt glorious God, againſt whom they had rebelled. And in all, the divine Wiſdom appears in the moſt ſhining Light, in ſo contriving this aſtoniſhing Work, as to diſplay all the divine Attributes in their brighteſt Glory. Juſtice and Holineſs never appear'd ſo bright and clear as when Mercy was moſt fully and boundleſly exerciſed. Chriſt is the Witneſs, that the divine Attributes never claſh, the Honour of one never ſuffers by the Glory of another; but all are harmonious: For God is one; there is a perfect Simplicity in his Nature. This greateſt Work that ever was done, is the ſtrongeſt Proof that all his Works are ſo done as to be honourable to all his Perfections, that he can never contradict or diſhonour any one of them. Every one of them is God, and they all are God. God is Wiſdom, God is Love, God is Mercy, Juſtice, &c; and theſe Perfections are infinite and abſolute in God, and they are God. He is one; and all the Perfections of his Nature are ſo perfectly united, that in the Acting or Exerciſe of Juſtice, 'tis a merciful God; and in the Exerciſe of Mercy 'tis a juſt, and holy, and ſovereign God who acts. Theſe are ſome of thoſe Ways wherein Chriſt came to bear Witneſs to the infinite Perfections of God.

I paſs now to the next general Head.

4. *Chriſt came to bear Witneſs to the Providence of God.*

The God who made the World never left it without Witneſs, that he governed it; no, not without numberleſs Witneſſes in all Ages, Times, and Places; wherefore ſaith the Apoſtle, *He left not himſelf without Witneſs*, Acts 14. 17. But the cleareſt Witneſs of this was given by Jeſus Chriſt. His coming into the World was (as you may hear afterwards) to fulfil all the Propheſies that had been given forth, and all the Promiſes that had been made to Mankind, and to all the Rules and Laws which God had given them

in

in all Times after the Fall. And ſo it was Witneſs of the conſtant Care he had all along taken of Mankind, and his Government of them: That he did not at any Time leave off his Care to over-rule all Events, to accompliſh the great Thing he had upon his Heart for Men, before the Foundation of the World, and that *all his Works were fore-known to him*, Acts 15. 18. As this was a Confirmation of the Religion of Nature, and all that had ever been reveal'd, ſo it proved, that God had ever had his Eye on Man; that Mankind had always been the Subjects of his Care. And as this was with a View to the Recovery of Man from Sin to Holineſs, and bringing him to Heaven, and eternal Salvation, it was a Proof that his Care had been for this in all the Events that had brought it on, and prepared Things for this Manifeſtation of his Grace. And the Coming of Chriſt was ſo taken Care of, that it might be known according to all the Predictions of him from the Beginning; that he was the the Seed of the Woman promiſed to *Adam*; the Shiloh ſpoken of by *Jacob*, the Prophet whom *Moſes* foretold; and the great Meſſiah who was foretold by all the Prophets: So in preſerving the Line of his Succeſſion, in taking Care that his Genealogy ſhould be found; in the Circumſtances of his Birth, over-ruling the Taxation or Enrollment of the Roman Empire, that Chriſt might be born at *Bethlehem* and enrolled there. And in all the various Circumſtances of his Life and Death, and their exact Correſpondence to the Promiſe and Deſign of God, Chriſt gave Witneſs that the Providence of God conſtantly governed all Things that ſeem'd to have the moſt caſual Event; that God brought about his own Purpoſe in Spite of all Endeavours of the World, or Hell againſt them: So all the Circumſtances of our Saviour's Trials, and relating to his Death, appear to have been under a very particular and ſpecial Direction and Government of a wonderful, and myſterious Providence, which over-rul'd all the Deſigns of Men and Devils, againſt their own Intentions and Purpoſes, and made them exactly anſwer the Scheme of Divine Wiſdom, & accompliſh the Counſels and Decrees of God; and bring about what he had reſolved ſhould be done. Wherefore our Lord tells *Pilate* when he

he boaſted of his Power againſt him, Thou couldſt have *no Power at all, except it were given thee from above*, *Joh.* 19. 11. As this great Event was the grand Object that the Church always had its Eye upon, and would always chiefly obſerve in all ſucceeding Times of the World, Chriſt gave the cleareſt Witneſs of the Providence of God.

5. *Chriſt came to bear Witneſs to the Doctrine of the Trinity.* The Unity of the Godhead is diſcovered by natural Light. *The inviſible Things of him from the Creation of the World are clearly ſeen, being underſtood by the Things that were made, even his eternal Power, and God-head*, *Rom.* 1. 20. But nothing of the Trinity of Perſons in the Unity of the God-head is known from thence: and the Intimations of it in the Old-Teſtament are but dark and obſcure, in Compariſon of theſe Diſcoveries which are made of it by Chriſt. By his coming into the World this glorious Doctrine, one of the great Fundamentals of Chriſtianity, is brought to open Light, and moſt clearly manifeſted. Chriſt, the eternal Son of God, came into the World from the eternal Father; ſent by him, yet he came of his own Will: *He received Commandment of the Father to lay down his Life, and yet he had Power to lay it down, and to take it again. He offered himſelf, and was raiſed from the Dead through the eternal Spirit; by him God made the World; yet all Things were made by him, and for him.* And *he thought it no Robbery to be equal with God.* He tell us, *The Father, the Word, and the Spirit are God, and yet theſe three are one*, *Joh.* 1. 1, 2, 3. Chriſt bears witneſs to this great Doctrine in his Word and Works. He wrought all his Works in the Name of God, and by Commiſſion from his Father, who therein bare Teſtimony to him in all that he pretended to be, and ſet the great Seal of Heaven to the Truth of all he ſaid; yet he wrought them by himſelf; his own Power, and the God-head which dwelt in him bodily. The Holy Spirit is ſent from the Father, and ſent by Chriſt to renew and ſanctify the Elect, and yet it is ſaid Jam. 1. 18. *Of his own Will begat he us.* The ſame Works, the ſame Knowledge, the ſame Word is by Chriſt attributed to all the Perſons of the Trinity, and the ſame Honour required for them all. And Chriſt ſhews us, that in the Work of our Redemption they

all

all co-operate, according to the Order of their Subſiſtence, and an agreed OEconomy or Rule in their Operations; and yet theſe three are one, and the ſame God. This is abundantly witneſſed in all the Operations of our Redemption; in the Declarations of Chriſt himſelf and of the Holy Spirit in the Apoſtles. In the Work of Redemption by Chriſt is the moſt glorious Diſplay of this Doctrine. The cleareſt Revelation of the Truth and Reality of this incomprehenſible Myſtery was made manifeſt by Chriſt; ſo that it has been the Opinion of ſome great Men, that the grand Deſign of God's making this World, and permitting the Fall of Man, was to make ſuch a glorious Diſcovery of the great Doctrine of the Trinity, and the eternal Truth and Reality of the Subſiſtence of the three divine Perſons in the Unity of the Godhead.

6. *Chriſt came to bear Witneſs to the Truth of ancient Propheſy, and of his being the King of the Jews.*

There had been a great many Propheſies given out from Time to Time in the ſeveral Ages of the Church concerning him. It was foretold to *Adam*, *That the Seed of the Woman ſhould bruiſe the Serpent's Head*, Gen. 3. 15. And to *Abraham*, *That in his Seed all the Nations of the Earth ſhould be bleſſed*, Gen. 22. 18. This Promiſe was confirmed to *Iſaac*, and to *Jacob*. *Moſes* declared, that a Prophet *ſhould the Lord God raiſe up to Iſrael like unto him; to whom they ſhould hearken in all Things*, Deut. 18. 15. It was promiſed to *David* that Meſſiah ſhould come from him, and that according to the Fleſh, God would raiſe up of his Seed, a Prince, and a Saviour to *Iſrael*. And the Prophet *Iſaiah* deſcribes his Perſon, his Birth, the Circumſtances of it, and his Life and Death in very particular Manner, and with a ſurpriſing Exactneſs. All the Prophets ſpoke of him; and indeed the great Scope, End, and Deſign of the Propheſies, were to deſcribe the Perſon, Offices, and Redemption of Chriſt; and to direct the Faith, and Hope of God's People in all Ages to him: To explain the Meaning of the Types and Sacrifices under the Law, which were dark Shadows, and Deſcriptions of him. There are great Numbers of ſuch Paſſages in the Old Teſtament, which need not be inumerated

innumerated here. Now if Chriſt had not come, the Promiſes which God had made unto his People would have been broken, the divine Truth and Veracity would have been infinitely diſhonoured, and God would have made his People hope in a Lie. But Chriſt came to bear Witneſs to the Truth of them. He ſhew'd himſelf the very Perſon they all ſpake of, and was himſelf the Performance and Accompliſhment of them. His Coming gave full Proof of the Truth of all thoſe ancient Prophecies and Promiſes, being the very Perſon they all deſcribed. His Birth, his Deſcent, his Life, his Death, his ſpiritual Kingdom was ſuch as they had all foretold, and God had promiſed by them. This was a full Confirmation of their Truth, for it was the Fulfilment of the Promiſe of God *made unto the Fathers*, Acts 13. 32, 33. And when our bleſſed Saviour convinces his Diſciples of their Miſtake concerning the Meſſiah which they expected, he takes Occaſion to ſhew how he had fulfilled all the Scriptures which had ſpoken concerning the *Meſſiah*, Luke 24. 25, 26. So in the ſeveral Paſſages of his Life, and Circumſtances of his Death, Notice is taken by the Evangeliſt of the Neceſſity of them in Order to *the Fulfilling of the Scripture*. In all this he gave demonſtrative Evidence, that he was the Perſon always ſpoken of, and promiſed under the Character of the Meſſiah, and the King of the Jews. So he did by all his Miracles, and the wonderful Works which he wrought, witneſſing that good Confeſſion he made before *Pontius Pilate*, in my Text and Context.

7. *He came to bear Witneſs to the Truth of divine Revelation.* By proving the Truth of all the ancient Prophecies, and Predictions concerning the Meſſiah, Chriſt proved that all thoſe Revelations were given by God; and this alſo proved that the Men who dictated and wrote them, were ſent, and appointed of God to make thoſe Revelations to the World. And this was a ſtrong Evidence, that what they ſpake more than this in the Name of God, was done by his Authority and Direction; for it is highly improbable (to ſay the leaſt of it) that God ſhould ever employ Men to make known his Will to the World, who ſhould be very punctual, and exact in declaring it in ſome Things, and in others when

they pretend to come in the ſame Name, and by the ſame Authority, to vent Lies, Deceits, and Impoſtures, and aim to cheat and deceive Mankind: And that God ſhould own, and give undeniable Evidence to the Truth of what they delivered in ſome Things, and leave a Parcel of Falſhoods and Lies told by the ſame Men, under Pretence of the ſame Authority, ſtill to paſs under the Name of divine Truths uncapable of being diſcovered, or detected. But moreover, Chriſt own'd the Men as the Servants of the Moſt High God, and as ſent and directed by his Spirit; *Moſes*, the Prophets, and the Pſalms are expreſly named by him, and allowed to be written by divine Direction, and the Things in them ſpoken concerning him; and he tells us, theſe are the Writings of God, or Writings dictated and inſpired by the Holy Ghoſt. He often appeals to his own Actions and Character as neceſſary to the Fulfilment of theſe Writings of the Holy Men of God, *and this becauſe the Scripture cannot be broken.*

There are very many Paſſages of them cited by Chriſt and his Apoſtles in the New-Teſtament, as the Word of God.----Beſides, in the New-Teſtament, Chriſt has made known all the Mind and Will of God concerning Man; and declared that he came from God to give Light unto the World; and is the true Light that ſhineth, and came forth from God, to manifeſt his Will to Mankind. As he fulfilled all the ceremonial Law of the Jews which then fell and ceaſed of it ſelf, ſo he has adopted all the moral and ſpiritual Part of their Religion, and of natural Religion into his own Inſtitution, and confirm'd it by the Authority of God, and the Law-giver, and Saviour of Men. His coming into the World was an inconteſtible Proof that the Revelation God had made to the ancient Patriarchs, and to the Jews, was of God; and that their Religion came from Heaven. He ſpake of it always as ſuch, and ſpake of thoſe Perſons, whoſe Piety and Intereſt in the Favour of God the Scripture witneſſes, as eminent and holy Men, and gone to Heaven; and ſaid that thoſe who expect to go there, muſt be Followers of them, who walked by Faith, and pleaſed God. He ſhewed that his Religion, and the

the Chriſtian Inſtitution, was from God, by ſuch Works, Miracles, and Fulfilment of Prophecies, as gave uncontrolable Witneſs to the Truth of all he ſaid and did. By his Life, his Miracles, his Reſurrection, he proved that he came from God, and that all he taught and did and ſuffered was by the Appointment and Will of God; and therefore that his Goſpel as itſelf declares, is to be the ſtanding Rule of Man's Faith and Obedience in all future Times to the End of the World: That no Man ſhall *add to it or take from it*, without *being curſed of God*, and having his Name *blotted out of the Book of Life*, Rev. 22. 18, 19. Herein he bear Witneſs to all the Truths of revealed Religion, all the revealed, and poſitive Inſtitutions of God's Will, that were ever made to the World.

8. *He came to bear Witneſs to the Truth of the Promiſe, and Covenant of Grace which God made with Man.*

When the firſt Covenant was broke by the Fall and Sin of *Adam*, and Man could have no juſt Hope of living by that, and had nothing to expect from it but Death, and the Curſe, it pleaſed God of his infinite and meer Mercy to enter into a Covenant of Grace with Man: Wherein Man is to live not by his own Works, but by the Obedience and Sufferings of Chriſt, i. e. By the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt, by the mere Grace of God given and beſtowed through him. On this all the holy Men that had lived from the Fall of *Adam* 'till the Coming of Chriſt, had depended: They had hoped in the Promiſes God had given of a Saviour to come; in the Faith of theſe they had lived and died: Now Chriſt's coming into the World gave abundant Atteſtation to the Truth of the Covenant of Grace, and the Promiſes of it. This Covenant was made with Chriſt for his People: He is the Head of it; its Surety, and Undertaker for the Fulfilment of it on the Part of Man; the ſtrongeſt Security alſo for the Fulfilment on the Part of God. *All the Promiſes of God are in him Yea, and in him Amen*, 2 Cor. 1.2. Chriſt's coming into the World, his Death and Sufferings, were in Purſuance of that Covenant, and the Performance of the Promiſes of it. Theſe were made in Chriſt, and are to be performed to him, on the Account of his abſolute, and perfect Obedience, and

Satisfaction and Righteouſneſs. By Chriſt they are purchaſed, paid for, and ſecured to all that believe in him; ſo that the Faithfulneſs of God ſtands bound to perform them: As God was true and faithful to his Promiſe to Man, to give him a Saviour, and ſend his Son into the World to redeem him; ſo he will aſſuredly be true to his own Son, in giving him all he died for, and ſatisfying his Soul with his Seed for his Travail and Death. God the Father having given a Seed to his Son in the Covenant of Redemption, and promiſed him on Condition of *his making his Soul an Offering for Sin, he ſhould ſee his Seed, and the Travail of his Soul, and be ſatisfied*, Iſa. 5. 3. 'Tis impoſſible he ſhould fail of performing the Promiſes of the Covenant of Grace to thoſe for whom Chriſt died: For theſe are made to Chriſt for them, and put into his Hands to be fulfilled, and performed for, in, and by them, i. e. by them, and in them, ſo far as thoſe Promiſes ſecure the Graces of the Spirit of God and the ſanctifying Influences and Work of it. Having made the Promiſes of the Covenant to Chriſt the Head for all his ſpiritual Seed, God is become bound to him for the Performance, and his Covenant never can be diſanul'd, nor any Promiſe of it fail. The Apoſtle argues from hence the unfailing Certainty of every Article of this Covenant, Gal. 3. 15, 16.---- *Tho' it be a Man's Covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no Man diſanulleth or addeth thereto. Now to Abraham and his Seed were the Promiſes made. He ſaith not, and to Seeds, as of many, but as of one, and to thy Seed, which is Chriſt.* The Word Seed is in the ſingular Number, and points at a ſingle Perſon, viz. Chriſt. The Covenant is firm for ever, the Promiſes being made to Chriſt, and in him to his ſpiritual Seed.

God can never be unfaithful to his own Son. 'Tis impoſſible he could ever have been induced to perſwade him to undertake or conſent to his Undertaking to come into the World, and ſuffer and die on the Errand of Man's Redemption, with the Promiſe of the Covenant of Redemption, with all the Promiſes of the Covenant of Grace made over to him, and put into his Hands for all his ſpiritual Seed, and then deceive him. This would be no better than to do all this to deceive, and decoy him on Purpoſe to make him a publick Spectacle

Spectacle of Infamy, Shame and Suffering, for the Pleaſure of ſuch an Impoſition and Deceit. The very Suppoſition therefore of this is ſuch an infinite Reproach to God, and ſo infinitely contrary to his Nature, as that it plainly appears to be a Thing infinitely impoſſible. None but a Devil could be guilty of it. Chriſt has a Right to claim the Fulfilment of all the Promiſes of the new Covenant for his People, both from the Word and Oath of God, in both which it is impoſſible *for him to lie*, Heb. 5. 18. To this the Heirs of Promiſe flee as their ſtrong Conſolation. If God would according to his Covenant and free Promiſe, give his Son to die; will he not with him alſo freely give us all the Reſt contained in the Covenant? Since he perform'd the greater, he will certainly perform the leſs. Since he would fulfil his Promiſe made from no Conſideration but his own free and ſovereign Grace, and meer Good-will, he can't fail of performing the Promiſes which his Son has purchaſed, and paid for, with his own Blood, and which are made to him for that valuable Conſideration. The Covenant is ſealed, and all its Promiſes confirm'd with the Blood of the Son of God; and the Church, i. e. all true Believers, are *purchaſed with the Blood of God*, Acts 20. 28. It is the moſt impoſſible for God to lie or be unfaithful in this of any Thing, for here all his glorious Attributes are bound in the ſtrongeſt Manner they can; By Covenant, by Oath, by Purchaſe, by Promiſe, and Security in his own Name, and by his own eternal Son, who has ſeal'd the Truth of all with his own Blood. Chriſt ſhews us that God muſt ceaſe to have any Truth, Holineſs or Honour, or any one Perfection, before the Covenant of Grace, or the Promiſes of it can fail.

9. *Chriſt came to bear Witneſs to the Terms of Salvation offered in the Goſpel, and of the Sincerity of God in theſe Offers.*

The Covenant of Grace was made in, with, and through Chriſt for the Elect. All the Happineſs of Man is come through his Hands. Now he had an abſolute Right in the new Covenant to impoſe his own Laws, and the Terms of that Life he would give? He has accordingly appointed, and propounded the Term or Condition of Faith in his Blood

and

and Merit, Righteouſneſs and Obedience, Mark 16. 16. *And this Faith worketh by Love, produceth a gracious Sorrow for Sin, purifieth the Heart*, and engages the Believer to live and walk as ſeeing him who is inviſible, in all holy and ſincere Obedience to him. Chriſt has abundantly proved, that God is ſincere in the Offer of Life and Salvation to Men upon the Terms of the Goſpel. If he had not, he would not have given his own Son to have purchaſed this Life for Men, and ſent him to propound theſe Terms of Salvation to loſt Sinners. If God had not been in great Earneſt he had never been at ſuch infinite Expence, and done all the great Things he has done by Chriſt to prepare the Way for theſe Overtures of Salvation to Sinners. He has ſhewn them, that there ſtands no Difficulty in the Way, on his Part; that all Things are ready, and nothing can be wanting, but their Acceptance of the Terms on which God offers by his Son to be reconciled to them. If the great God could be ſo much in Earneſt as to ſee his Son made a Sacrifice to his Juſtice, to purchaſe Salvation for Sinners, and to give him for that End; to ſend him from Heaven on the Embaſſage of Peace and Reconciliation, on the Terms he has propounded in the Goſpel, he can't but be ſincere in the Offers of Life and Mercy to them.

10. *Chriſt came to bear Witneſs of the Excellency of Holineſs, and the Neceſſity of it, in Order to the Happineſs of Man.*

All he ſaid and did in the World was of a Piece; there was nothing but Holineſs; the moſt fervent Love of God, and of his Will and Law, that appeared in, and governed his Life. In all his Actions and Sufferings he had the ſame great Deſign; and it was *his Meat, and Drink to do his Father's Will, and to finiſh his Work*, John 4. 34. He always poſſeſs'd his Soul with ſuch a divine Calmneſs, as no Paſſion could diſturb, no worldly Joy, or Sorrow could interrupt. He lived in an entire and perfect Submiſſion to God, and Satisfaction in his Will. His Obedience ſhewed the Neceſſity and Fitneſs of our Obedience both as a Debt and as the Means of our Happineſs. And he came to redeem us from Hell, only by redeeming us from Sin, and reſtoring us to the

the Image of God ; and making us according to our Meaſure and Capacity, wiſe, holy, true, good, juſt, and merciful as God is. And theſe divine Vertues being wrought in us through a Faith and Love which aſſimilates us to God, are the Way in which we are to be made happy ; and without which we never can be happy. If we be unholy we have Hell within us, and no outward Benefit can make us happy ; therefore 'tis ſaid, *Chriſt came to ſave his People from their Sins* ; and had his *Name Jeſus* from the Nature and Deſign of his Work. Matth. 1. 21. So the Apoſtle *Paul*, Eph. 5. 25, 26. *Chriſt alſo loved the Church and gave himſelf for it, that he might ſanctify and cleanſe it.* Now this appears a conſtant and eternal Truth, If we be not delivered from Sin, 'tis impoſſible we ſhould be happy : If this Heaven of Holineſs be not in us, no Heaven without us can make us bleſſed.

11. *Chriſt came to bear Witneſs of the Worth of Souls, and the Worthleſſneſs of all Things in this World.*

He that was the King of Heaven and Earth, the Lord of Angels, the Creator and Governour of the Univerſe ; who while he was here in the Fleſh, had good Right to command all Creatures in Heaven and Earth, and to uſe them all as he pleaſed ; yet while he dwelt here in Fleſh, was ſo regardleſs of all the Conveniences, Honours, Riches, and Pleaſures of this World, that he had no Place to lay his Head. He cared nothing for all the Pomp and Eaſe and Pleaſures of this Life ; yet he knew how to eſtimate all Things better than any Perſon that ever dwelt in this World. He has taught us to ſet ſuch an Eſtimate on them as he did. But then he came to ſave immortal Souls ; for this he lived, he taught, he laboured without ceaſing, he ſpent his Life in unwearied and indefatigable Diligence. For this he endured all the Shame, the Scorn, the Reproaches of this World, and for this he bled and died. He knew that Souls were to live forever, and to enjoy the Image and Love of God eternally, or elſe to die a living and immortal Death, under his everlaſting and inſupportable Curſe and Wrath. And he has taught us to make ſuch an Eſtimate of them. Mark 8. 36, 37. *For what ſhall it profit a Man if he ſhall gain the whole World and loſe*

loſe his own Soul, or what ſhall a Man give in Exchange for his Soul? Since the Son of God thought Souls worth his Pains, his Labours, Reproaches, Sufferings, Death, and Blood, 'tis certainly a ſufficient Witneſs they are of ineſtimable Worth; and that all Things in this World are nothing, of no Value or Account in Compariſon of a Soul: While theſe Things ought to be treated as in themſelves nothing, of no conſiderable Conſequence or Concern; the Concerns of the Soul are to be regarded as Matters of infinite and eternal Importance.

12. laſtly. *Chriſt came to bear Witneſs of the Reality, and Greatneſs of the Rewards of the other World, and of the Reſurrection thereunto.*

His coming ſhews us that the Puniſhment of Sin, and the Pains of divine Wrath for it, were certain neceſſary Fruits of Sin. Sin muſt needs make the Sinner miſerable. It naturally and neceſſarily deſtroy'd the Soul, ſince it muſt be recovered from Sin, & reſtored to Holineſs by the Son of God in Order to its Happineſs. Again, God had certainly determined on the Puniſhment of Sin, and to exact the full Demands of the Law, ſeeing he would not ſave one of the fallen Race of *Adam* without the Satisfaction of his Son, and the Sacrifice of his Body and Blood to anſwer the Challenges of Juſtice, and the Law: ſo that all thoſe who are, not juſtified by his Righteouſneſs, and ſanctified by his Spirit muſt periſh eternally and without Remedy. If God would not hear the Cries of his own Son, that the bitter Cup might paſs from him if poſſible, it will certainly be impoſſible for any one of *Adam's* Race to eſcape it, unleſs by the Satisfaction and Righteouſneſs of Jeſus Chriſt. If the obtaining this Deliverance had not been a great and mighty Thing, the Son of God would not have come into the World, and undergone the amazing Sufferings and Wrath which he bore for this End. This alſo witneſſeth that the Joys of Heaven are inconceivably great, beyond all that hath entred into the Heart of Man to conceive. Chriſt need not have done ſo much to purchaſe them, to prepare his People for them, and bring them to them, if they had not been beyond all that was ever known by Men inconceivable, and eternal.

But

But when the Son of God, who came from Heaven, and knew the Glories and Felicities of that bleſſed State, thought it worth his while to ſuffer and die to raiſe up poor ſinful loſt Souls from Hell, and bring them to Heaven, he gave the cleareſt Witneſs of the Certainty, and Greatneſs of theſe future Recompences. And the ſame he has abundantly declared in his Word.

As he was himſelf the firſt Fruits of the Reſurrection of the Body, and roſe as the Head of all his Redeemed, he gave undoubted Witneſs of the Certainty of that Doctrine, and was the Example of the Almighty Power of God, and ſhew'd us that his Members muſt all riſe after him, no more to ſee Corruption. John 11. 25, 26. *Jeſus ſaid unto her, I am the Reſurrection and the Life: He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet ſhall he live; and whoſoever liveth and believeth in me, ſhall never die.* Hence the Apoſtle ſays, Phil. 3. 20, 21. *We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt: Who ſhall change our vile Body, that it may be faſhioned like unto his glorious Body.* Col. 3. 4. *When Chriſt, who is our Life, ſhall appear, then ſhall ye alſo appear with him in Glory.* In 1 Cor. 15. the Apoſtle ſhews us largely, how Chriſt's Reſurrection is a Proof and Security of the Reſurrection of the Saints. *But now is Chriſt riſen from the Dead, and become the firſt Fruits of them that ſlept.--- By this Man came the Reſurrection of the Dead.---Chriſt the firſt Fruits, afterwards they that are Chriſt's at his Coming.*

SERMON III.

IN diſcourſing on the ſecond DOCTRINE, viz. *Chriſt came into the World to bear Witneſs to the Truth*, I propoſed to conſider, 1. *What are thoſe Truths which he came to bear Witneſs to.* And 2. To conſider, *How he bears Witneſs to them.*

I have briefly gone through the firſt of theſe, and pointed out ſome of the great Truths which Chriſt came to bear Witneſs to.

I proceed now in the ſecond Place, to ſhew, *How Chriſt bore Witneſs to theſe Truths.*

In conſidering what Truths Chriſt came to bear Witneſs to, I have in great Meaſure prevented myſelf on this ſecond Head. For it was not eaſy to ſhew that Chriſt did bear Witneſs to theſe Truths, without ſaying how he did this. But that you may have a more diſtinct View of it, it may notwithſtanding be needful to mention the Ways, in which Chriſt has born, and does bear Witneſs to the Truth. And there are three Ways wherein Chriſt does this.

1. *By exemplifying the Truth.*

Chriſt ſays of himſelf, *I am the Truth*, John 14. 6. He is infinite eternal Truth, as he is God. He is the ſecond Perſon in the holy Trinity, was true and real God, and proceeded and came forth from God, and went to him. The Spirit reſted upon him, is ſent by him, and ſent from God. So he ſhewed forth the eternal Truth of the Subſiſtence of the Trinity of Perſons in the Unity of God.---He is Truth, as he is the very Subſtance of all the Shadows and Types of the Old Teſtament, and all the ancient Diſcoveries which God

God made to the World. He is the Truth, as he is the Perſon ſpoken of, deſcribed and aimed at, in all the Prophecies of the Meſſiah in the Old Teſtament. All the Types, Sacrifices and Ceremonies of the Law were Shadows of him, for they were all deſign'd to prefigure, hold forth, and deſcribe him in his Perſon, Offices, Life, Death, and the Glories of his Redemption. Chriſt came to fulfil all theſe Types, and to accompliſh all that was figured, by the Shadows and Repreſentations made of him, and ſo *he is the Body*, as the Apoſtle calls him, *Col.* 2. 17. He is the Body of all theſe Things, i. e. The Subſtance, the Truth, and Reality of them, in whom they all centred, and at whom they pointed.---He may be ſaid to have exemplified the Truth of the firſt Covenant, by fulfilling of it, and yielding perfect Obedience to it; and of the Threatning, by bearing of it, and of the Curſe of the Law, by undergoing that Curſe himſelf. He has proved the Truth of God's infinite Hatred of Sin, and his inflexible Wrath againſt it, of the ſevere and inviolable Rights of Juſtice, by bearing the infinite Wrath of God, ſuffering to the full Satisfaction of divine Juſtice, and anſwering the Claims of the holy Law of God.---So he manifeſted the Providence of God by being himſelf, in his Perſon, and in Reſpect to what he did for Man, the greateſt Inſtance of divine Care that ever was in the World, and that Subject in whom the Reſt of the Acts of divine Providence towards the Church centered and terminated.---He exemplified the Law of God, and the Holineſs of it in his Life, which was all holy, juſt, and good, a perfect Pattern and Example of that Truth, and of living to God wherein our Duty, and our Happineſs lie. He was a perfect Pattern, and Example of all Virtue, in doing and ſuffering the Will of God. And he was himſelf the Expiation of our Sins, and the Satisfaction which was given to the Juſtice and Law of God. So he was the Truth, and bear Witneſs to the Truth. He was himſelf the Fulfilment of the Promiſes and Prophecies of the Old Teſtament, reſpecting the Meſſiah. His Coming, Perſon, and Sufferings, and what he did thereby, were the actual Performance of them. He was a perfect Example of Self-Denial, Mortifi-

cation to the World, and of an heavenly Life; and as he roſe from the Dead, and went to Heaven, he was an Example, an Inſtance, and the firſt Fruits of the Reſurrection, and Evidence of the Immortality and Bleſſedneſs of all his, that follow him.

2. *Chriſt bears Witneſs to the Truth, by revealing it.*

Not to ſpeak here of the ancient Revelations made by the Spirit ſent from him (who really was the Author of all divine Revelation in all Ages, as the Apoſtle ſhews, 1*Pet.* 1. 10, 11.) Not to mention his Appearances to the ancient Patriarchs and good Men in the Times of the Old Teſtament, or before: He has in the Goſpel revealed all the Truth and Will of God for our Salvation. He has revealed the Deſign of his coming into the World, to die for Sin: and that he is the Saviour, the great Prophet, Prieſt, and King, who was expected under the Name of the Meſſiah; *That he was the Son of God, and the Son of Man. That by one offering of himſelf, he hath perfected for ever them that are ſanctified.* He has made the Terms of Salvation to be Faith in himſelf, Repentance and Holineſs flowing therefrom. He has given Laws to his Church, all the Rules of holy Living neceſſary for them. He has revealed all that of the Nature and Perfection of God, which is neceſſary to be known by them in Order to their Happineſs. He has reveal'd the Doctrine of a future State, and brought Light and Immortality to Light in the Goſpel; he has plainly declared, that he *who believeth on the Son of God, ſhall have eternal Life, and he that believeth not ſhall be damned, and the Wrath of God abideth on him.* That there will be a Reſurrection of the Juſt, and of the Unjuſt, the one to eternal Life, and the other to eternal Damnation. He has adopted all the Rules and Duties of natural Religion into the Syſtem of the Chriſtian Inſtitution, and made them Parts, and Branches of the univerſal Righteouſneſs which the Goſpel requires: He has adopted all the moral Law, and its Appendages, ſo far as they are of a moral Nature, which were given to the Jews and declared them to be of God, and obligatory on all Chriſtians. He has therefore reveal'd all Truth to the World, and manifeſted the Mind of God, his Nature and Perfections,

in

in all Things wherein they are neceſſary to be known by Men, to make them holy, and eternally happy.

3. *Chriſt bears Witneſs to the Truth by confirming it.*

A Witneſs is to confirm the Truth, or clear and confirm that which is otherwiſe doubtful, and uncertain to Men. Truth is the ſame Thing eternally and unchangeably, whether Men ſee the Evidence of it, and believe it to be Truth or no. Oftentimes Men don't yield to the Truth, they don't ſee the Evidence of it, and ſo ſuſpend their Belief, or reject it. Now Chriſt came to bear Witneſs to the Truth, by confirming and proving it to the Underſtandings and Conſciences of Men, and ſetting ſuch Evidences, of it before them, that they might not be able to gainſay or reſiſt it. This he did, and does two Ways, viz. by Miracles, and by his Spirit.

1. *By Miracles.*

By his Miracles he bore Witneſs to the Truth of Religion, the Truth of the divine Revelation which he made, the Truth of God's Perfections and Providence, and the Truth of his Promiſe and Covenant: *That all Men through him might believe.* A Miracle is ſuch a Work of God as is evidently the Effect of divine Power, and either ſuperſedes, and outdoes all the known Laws of Nature, goes beyond them, or ſets them aſide, and acts contrary to them: whereby it is evident that the Author of Nature does the Work which is done, none elſe being able to act beyond the Powers of Nature, or to controul and ſet them aſide. Now Chriſt wrought many great and mighty Works, which are plainly beyond all the known Powers of Nature; and were often contrary to the known Laws of it. As the feeding four or five Thouſand People with a few Barley-Loaves and a Couple of little Fiſhes, *Mat.* 14. 15, 16, 25. Another Time with ſeven Loaves, and a few little Fiſhes, *Matth.* 15. 22, 30, &c. The Healing all Sorts of Diſeaſes, by the Touch of his Hand, or the ſpeaking a Word. He gave Sight to the Blind, yea to them that had been born blind, which they own'd was a Thing that had not been done from the Foundation of the World, *John* 9. 32. & 10. 21. And this his moſt incurable Enemies could no Ways get over

over, but by reſolving not to believe it, inSpite of the beſt Evidence, or by acting againſt their Conſciences. He raiſed the Dead, which was ſtill a greater Thing than this, and evidently outdid all the Powers of Nature: and he ſeal'd all at laſt by his own Reſurrection from the Dead through the eternal Spirit, by which he offered himſelf unto God. By all theſe he bore uncontrolable Witneſs that God was with him, as the poor Man agreed, *John* 9. 33. Theſe Proofs that God was with him, were a ſetting to the Seal of Omnipotence, that God approved of him in the Character, which he aſſumed, of being the Meſſiah, the King of the Jews, the Saviour of Men; and that he came to give his Life a Ranſom for Sinners; and that all the Doctrine which the Goſpel reveals concerning him, is true, and came from God.--- For if his Miſſion, and Claim to his Authority was not from God, then by his Miracles God himſelf had put Men under a moral Neceſſity of believing a Lie, and to put infinite Diſhonour upon himſelf: which, 'tis eaſy to ſee is impoſſible for him to do. By Chriſt's Miracles he inconteſtably proved, that he was the Meſſiah, and this confirm'd the Truth of all the ancient Prophecies concerning the Meſſiah, and of all the Revelation which God had made before: And it alſo confirm'd the Doctrine which he taught concerning his Sufferings and Death, and the End of his Satisfaction and Obedience, and therefore confirmed the Truth of all his Revelation concerning the Terms of our Salvation, and the great Doctrine on which it all depends. This confirms the Neceſſity of our Submiſſion to the Authority of Chriſt and his Laws in the Goſpel, in Order to our Salvation: for they have the cleareſt Sanctions of the divine Authority upon them, and as great Evidence as can outwardly be given to us. So all the revealed Doctrines peculiar to the New Teſtament, are confirm'd and eſtabliſh'd to be the Revelation and Will of God- As the Apoſtle obſerves, the Reſurrection, and the laſt Judgment are proved by the Reſurrection of Chriſt, *Acts* 17. 31. This confirm'd his Power to give his Apoſtles their Commiſſion, and the divine Authority of all they did and taught in Purſuance of it; as alſo the Miracles which they wro't in the Name of Chriſt, and as they declared by

by his Authority proved and confirmed the ſame Thing. Theſe are Confirmations and Atteſtations by the Seal of Heaven, to the Truth, and Reality of the great Office, and Power of Chriſt the only Mediator and Almighty Saviour, and of all the Revelations and Doctrine he has made known in his Word; the Seal of Omnipotence put to the Covenant of Grace in Chriſt, that Men might believe on his Name, and put their Truſt in him. John 5. 36, 37. *But I have greater Witneſs than that of John: For the Works which the Father hath given me to finiſh, the ſame Works that I do, bear Witneſs of me, that the Father hath ſent me.* And Chapt. 10. 25. *The Works that I do in my Father's Name, they bear Witneſs of me.* Chapt. 15. 24. *If I had not done among them the Works which none other Man did, they had not had Sin.*

2. *Chriſt confirms the Truth by his Spirit.*

In all God has been doing towards the World by Chriſt, he has been dealing with guilty, ſinful, loſt, ſelf-ruined Creatures, blinded, and deceived by Sin; thence filled with Prejudices againſt, and Jealouſies concerning God, having their Underſtanding *darkned, and blinded, and therefore alienated from the Life of God.* To recover and ſave ſuch Creatures, 'tis after all neceſſary, that the Holy Spirit ſhould be ſent from God to bear Witneſs in the Name of Chriſt, to the Truth of the Goſpel, and make Application of the great Doctrines in it to the Underſtanding and Conſcience of ſinful, blinded Men. For this End, before Chriſt went to Heaven, he promiſed to ſend the Spirit from the Father, and tells his Diſciples, that it was expedient that he ſhould go to the Father, that the Spirit might come not only to reveal further Diſcoveries of his Will to his Apoſtles, and by them to the World, but to be a Witneſs in the Hearts and Conſciences of Men, of the divine Truth of thoſe which are revealed in the Word of the Goſpel. For tho' the Word of Chriſt, and the great Truths of Religion have been ſufficiently atteſted by Miracles, and Proofs of an outward Nature; yet ſuch is the natural Blindneſs of Men's Minds, and the Oppoſition of their Hearts to the Truths of the Goſpel, their Enmity and Prejudices againſt God, and their guilty Fears,

and

and Dread of him, that they are afraid to receive the Evidence, and unwilling to yield to the Truth of the Goſpel, until there is an inward Witneſs given to the Conſcience, overpowering the inward Fears and Scruples of their Hearts, and their natural Prejudices, and Unwillingneſs to ſubmit to them. Wherefore Chriſt promiſed his Spirit to be ſent by him from the Father *to bring all Truth to Remembrance, and to teſtify of him*, John 14. 26. The Office and Work of the Spirit is to give Witneſs for Chriſt, to ſhew the Reality and Certainty of divine Truths, and the Excellency and Glory of Chriſt, and the Things of Chriſt; according to that Promiſe of our Saviour, John 16. 14, 15, *He ſhall glorify me: for he ſhall receive of mine, and ſhall ſhew it unto you. All Things that the Father hath, are mine: Therefore ſaid I, that he ſhall take of mine, and ſhall ſhew it unto you.* This Witneſs of the Spirit is not of any Thing new, which Chriſt hath not reveal'd: but is a Teſtimony given to the Soul, of the Truth and Excellency of thoſe Things which Chriſt has reveal'd in his Word. Wherefore, the Spirit is to convince the World *of Sin, of Righteouſneſs, and of Judgment*, John 16. 8. This is by the Inſtrumentality and Truth of the Word. The Things which the Spirit teacheth, are all Things which Chriſt has reveal'd. And this Teaching is the anointing, which the Apoſtle ſpeaks of, 1 John 2. 27. This Work and Office of the Spirit is therefore ſaid to be *a bearing Witneſs to the Truth*, 1 John 5. 6. The Truth of Chriſt is confirm'd to the Soul by the Witneſs of the Spirit, as a Teſtimony given to Men's Hearts and Conſciences, which they cannot withſtand; irrefragably witneſſing in their Minds the divine Truth and Excellency of the Goſpel, ſo as to overpower and bear down their Prejudices, overcome their Fears and break through the thick Darkneſs which blinds the natural Mind. So Chriſt bears Witneſs to the Truth, by confirming that Truth which is in him, and which he has revealed, by the Teſtimony of his Spirit making the Soul diſcern the Evidence and Certainty of the Revelation of his Word, and the divine Excellencies in it; ſo as to overcome their Fears and Scruples, to conquer their Prejudices, and make them willing, upon the Warrant of Chriſt and a divine Security,

Security, to venture their All upon it for Eternity; ſeeing its undoubted Certainty and divine Authority. They yield the free Conſent of their Hearts to its Obedience.

USE 1. *From this Doctrine we learn much of the Glory of the Work of Chriſt, and that Errand on which he came into this World.*

He came to bear Witneſs to the Truth. And this was the moſt glorious Buſineſs and Errand; an Embaſſage and Employment worthy of the Son of God! Worthy of that God who is infinite, uncreated, unchangeable, eternal Truth! It was worthy of Chriſt to teſtify the neceſſary, abſolute, eſſential Perfections of God, the Origin, and uncreated Sourſe of all Truth. The Glory of this Buſineſs, and Errand of Chriſt will be illuſtrated if we conſider two Things.

1. *The excellent Nature of thoſe Truths which Chriſt came eſpecially to reveal.*

Theſe were, as you have heard, the glorious Attributes and Perfections of God; the Trinity of Perſons in his Subſiſtence; the Revelation of his Nature and Will to the World; all his Prophecies and Predictions; and his eternal Counſel and Purpoſe about the Recovery and Salvation of Man: The ſtrict inexorable Juſtice of God; the Nature of Sin; his Reſolution to puniſh Sin according to its juſt Deſert: A future State of eternal Rewards and Puniſhments; the Reſurrection of the Body, the infinite Greatneſs of eternal Things, and the Worth of the Souls of Men. Now theſe are Truths of infinite, endleſs, and everlaſting Concern. *The great Things of God.* The higheſt, the moſt important Things that the ever-bleſſed and glorious God can ever be concerned in, or teſtify to. Some of theſe are the Truths which all Angels, and the moſt glorious Creatures in Heaven are infinitely concern'd in, and which deſerve the Attention of all Heaven and Earth. And they are all of them Truths which all Men are unſpeakably concerned in. Truth is the moſt excellent Object, and deſerves the cloſeſt Attention of all reaſonable Beings. 'Tis the Object of the eternal Complacency and Satisfaction of God himſelf. Therefore the Son of God could not come on a greater and better Buſineſs than this glorious Errand. Moreover, from theſe Truths which Chriſt came eſpecially to bear Witneſs

to, ſpring all other Truth, and all depend on, and are founded in them. All that is true in Nature and Providence, all the Relations of Things in the Univerſe one to another, and all the eternal Habitudes and Relations of Things, are from the Nature, Perfections, and Will of God, who is eſſential and infinite Truth. So that really Chriſt came to bear Witneſs to all Truth, as all flows from God, and depends on him.

2. *Conſidering the glorious Ends of Chriſt's coming into the World to bear Witneſs to the Truth.*

Chriſt came to bear Witneſs to the Truth when he came to ſave Sinners. Yea and his bearing Witneſs to it was, that he might ſave Sinners from Hell and Wrath: That he might recover Man to his primitive Perfection, and that Glory of Truth which he had loſt: That he might recover him to a Likeneſs to God, and Participation of the Divine Nature: That God might be manifeſted in the World, and that Glory of his which was obſcured and loſt out of this World, might be recovered; and all the Attributes and Law of God honoured and exalted in the moſt glorious Diſplay of the inviolable Truth and Purity of them: That the ſtrongeſt Teſtimony might be given to the Holineſs of God's Law, and his inviolable Adherance to it; and the higheſt Honour done it that could be put upon it: That there might appear the moſt perfect Harmony in all the divine Attributes and Operations; and an Harmony recovered between God, and his fallen Creatures: That God might be eternally glorified in the Salvation of ſome of the moſt miſerable Part of the Creation, in their being made like him in the Poſſeſſion of Truth, the proper Goodneſs and Perfection of their Nature, and Participation of the Nature of God. This Work, and this Salvation was a Work greater than all the Creation could have accompliſhed. So glorious that it had been infinitely worthy of the Labours and Employment of all the holy and bleſſed Angels, and of all the Creation: But an Honour that was due only to the Son of God, and which no other could ever have accompliſhed. Let the Heavens wonder, and the Earth be aſtoniſhed, at the myſterious Wiſdom, and boundleſs Grace of

of an holy God, a God of infinite Truth : And at the glorious Honour, Power, and Wiſdom ; the Grace and Love of the eternal Son of God and Saviour of Sinners! We might well conclude that when the Son of God came down from Heaven, he would come upon a Buſineſs worthy of himſelf, and ſuch truly was this glorious Errand on which he did come, that he might bear Witneſs to the Truth.

USE 2. *Learn hence what wonderful Satisfaction it will give to Angels and Saints, that Men's Salvation was not only conſiſtent with, but made Way for the moſt glorious Manifeſtation of the Truth that was ever made.*

When Man had ſinn'd againſt his Maker, broke his Law, and tranſgreſs'd the Covenant of Works, it ſeem'd hardeſt to conceive how a righteous, and holy God, who was infinitely jealous for the Honour of his Truth and Holineſs, ſhould find out a Way to ſave him. There ſeem'd not that Difficulty to conceive that Mercy, infinite, boundleſs Mercy, would be inclin'd to exerciſe itſelf towards ſuch a miſerable Object ; but how Truth and Holineſs ſhould be honoured, or even ſecured and preſerved from Inſult and Abuſe, from Contempts and Reproach in this Salvation, was a Myſtery too deep for Angels to fathom. For the Word had paſſed the Mouth of the glorious God, *In the Day that thou eateſt thereof thou ſhalt ſurely die.* And, *Curſed is every one that continueth not in all Things that are written in the Book of the Law to do them.*

Now ; how could God let the Sinner eſcape, and yet be true to his Law and Covevant, true to his Juſtice and Holineſs ? But behold in Jeſus Chriſt, theſe glorious Attributes not only preſerved without Stain or Blemiſh, but infinitely honoured and glorified! The Redeemer of Man, the eternal Son of God, came into the World that he might bear Witneſs to the Truth ; that he might vindicate the Honour of the Covenant of Works, by a perfect Obedience to the Law of it, and by giving full and perfect Satisfaction for the Tranſgreſſion of it by *Adam*; that God might not only loſe nothing of his Glory, but receive greater Honour to his Law than if *Adam* had kept it; greater Honour to his Juſtice, than if the Sinner had been eternally loſt, and ſuf-

fered the Pains of Hell; that the perfect Harmony of all the divine Attributes might appear, and the Simplicity of the divine Nature ſhine more bright and glorious by and through the Salvation of Man, who had done what he could to reproach and abuſe them all! From the Sin and Fall of Man, God was pleaſed to take Occaſion for the more glorious Diſcovery of himſelf, of his Will, of his Subſiſtence in the wonderful Myſtery of the three Perſons in the Godhead: To take Occaſion for the moſt glorious Diſcovery of himſelf in Propheſies and Predictions, and the Truth of them; of the Greatneſs and Glory of eternal Things, of the Worth of Souls, of a future State, and the Rewards of another World, than ever had been made, not only to *Adam*, but to all Mankind before the Coming of Chriſt: And all the great Things, the infinite Truths of God, ſhined more in Chriſt, and received greater Luſtre and Glory by the Witneſs which he gave to them, than by all the preceeding Revelations of them. So that the Truth of God is not not only ſaved from Diſhonour, and has its Share in the Triumphs of his other Attributes, but ſhines forever exalted and glorified with ſingular and ſpecial Advantage in this great Work of Man's Salvation; the eternal Triumph of Angels, and Matter for the everlaſting Praiſe and Admiration of all the precious Souls redeemed, and brought to Glory by Chriſt.

3. *Let us hence learn our infinite Obligations to Chriſt on this Account of his bearing Witneſs to the Truth.*

Truth is a Thing wherein the Happineſs of Man lies. 'Tis that which is the Food and Nouriſhment, the Pleaſure and Delight of Souls, ſweeter to the Soul than Honey to the Taſte. Men muſt be under infinite and eternal Obligations to Chriſt, that he who is the King of Trnth came into the World to bear Witneſs to it, to make it manifeſt, and give the moſt powerful and convincing Teſtimony to it that was ever given in this World. Theſe Obligations will be illuſtrated if we conſider,

1. *The Nature of Man's Miſery.*

This lay in the Blindneſs and Ignorance of his Mind: In his Separation from Truth; and thereby in his Separation from

from God, the infinite and eternal Source and Fountain and Author of it : And in the Poſſeſſion of Falſhood inſtead of Truth; in the Deceits of his own Heart, and the Deluſions of the Devil, the Father of Lies. For Sin is one infinite and eternal Falſhood ; a Denial of God's Goodneſs, Authority, Power, Wiſdom, Holineſs, Juſtice and Truth ; 'tis a Contradiction of the Reality and Excellency of the divine Nature, and of the true and proper Happineſs of Man. Every Sin is a Lie: It contains a Denial and Contradiction of the eternal Truth and Goodneſs of thoſe Things which are infinitely and eternally true and good, and wherein only Man's Happineſs lies. Man's Miſery therefore lay in being diſunited and broken off from God and Truth by Sin, and in Ignorance of the Nature of Truth reſpecting God and himſelf; from hence all Deluſions, Deceits, and falſe Conceptions of Happineſs ſpring. From hence Man thought he was happy in his own Miſery, and that he was purſuing his Happineſs when he was hugging and embracing Falſehood, Deceit and Lies. For the Apoſtle teſtifies, Eph. 4. 18. *Having the Underſtanding darkned, being alienated from the life of God through the Ignorance that is in them, becauſe of the Blindneſs of their Hearts.* Now to have the Truth teſtified and made known to the Mind, manifeſted and witneſſed in the Heart of Man, to ſee and feel the Power of it, and be put into the Poſſeſſion of it ; this ſets the poor Soul free from the Miſery of its Deluſions, clears the Mind, baniſhes Darkneſs Clouds and Errors from it. This clears up his Proſpects, makes him feel his Happineſs, and puts him into the Poſſeſſion of it. This makes him love and embrace Truth, and unite to the proper Good of his Soul, and feel a Pleaſure and Happineſs that is ſuited to an intelligent immortal Spirit. Hence all true Chriſtians muſt ſee their infinite Obligations to Jeſus Chriſt, who came to raiſe them up out of their Blindneſs and their Ignorance of God, his infinite and eternal Truth which Sin had darkned, broke them off from, and put them out of the Poſſeſſion of.---

2. *Conſidering the dreadful increaſe of this Miſery by Sin,*---

Man by his Sin and Fall from God, at firſt, loſt the Knowledge and the Love of God, brought Darkneſs and Blindneſs into

into his Mind, knew not thenceforth wherein his Happineſs lay; and, like what his Poſterity has been doing ever ſince, he went to ſowing Fig-leaves together to hide his Nakedneſs; while he groped after Happineſs he plunged himſelf deeper into Miſery. Mankind have been actually going further and further from God. Notwithſtanding the Notice that was given them of the Ruin of Man, of the Origin and Root of his Miſery, and of thoſe Truths which were neceſſary for his Recovery; yet the World lay in Wickedneſs, and Mankind were continually increaſing in their Ignorance and the Corruption of their Way upon the Earth, as the Pſalmiſt takes Notice in the 14th Pſal. begin. *They are corrupt, they have done abominable Works, there is none that doth Good. The Lord looked down from Heaven upon the Children of Men, to ſee if there were any that did underſtand, and ſeek God. They are all gone aſide, they are all together become filthy; there is none that doeth Good, no not one.* And the Apoſtle afterwards confirms it, Rom. 1. 22. *Profeſſing themſelves to be wiſe, they became Fools,* &c. Mankind in their Searches after Truth, fell in with falſe Notions of God. When they ſometimes lit on ſome Scraps of Truth, they took Care to corrupt them, and mix them with innumerable Errors and Fooleries: For they endeavoured to find ſuch a God as thro' Sin and Luſt they inclin'd to have; hence they fell into all Idolatry and Superſtition, and multiplied their Gods according to their Luſts and Fancies; and ſo they had a Worſhip and Religion ſuited to the Nature of the Gods they made, i. e. agreeable to their Luſts and Fancies. The Glimmerings of Truth in their Religion they raked up in Falſhood and Error; and as the Apoſtle ſays, *held the Truth in Unrighteouſneſs.* Rom. 1. 18. And when in infinite Mercy God had called the Jews out of the reſt of the World, taken them into Covenant with himſelf, and made known his Will and Truth to them; they did generally corrupt their Ways, and this they did more and more in one Age after another, 'till at Length they became generally worſe than the Heathen World, and while they own'd the true God, turn'd all Religion into Superſtition, and they thought to pleaſe God by ſome outward Rights, and bodily Exerciſes

Exerciſes of his Worſhip, in the Neglect of the Love of God, and that Wiſdom and Holineſs which is the Image of God, and the Copy of his eternal Truth.---And ſo it is with all Men in a natural State, they are running further and further from God, embracing Falſhoods and Deceits, aud involving themſelves in greater Darkneſs to their own everlaſting Ruin. Therefore Chriſt's bearing Witneſs to the Truth was, and is the only Way of recovering Men from that woful Ignorance and Blindneſs which is the Cauſe of their Ruin and Deſtruction, which is itſelf their Miſery, and involves them more and more in it.

USE 4. *Learn hence that Falſhood is infinitely hateful to God and Chriſt.*

The Father of Lights, the Author and Fountain of Truth, cannot but hate that which is infinitely contrary to himſelf; to the Glory of his Nature, his Image, Simplicity, and Perfection; to his Will, and to his Son. Chriſt bears Witneſs to the Truth that Men might ſee it, love it, embrace, poſſeſs, and practiſe it, and be for ever happy in it. All Falſhood is infinitely hateful to God. But we may for your Conviction and Awakening mention ſome particular Inſtances of it which are ſo.

1. *All Falſhood in Word.*

How ſad is it that there are many in the World who are ſo ignorant of the Nature of God, and the Excellency and Glory of Truth, as to live in and allow of Falſhood and Deceit in their Words and Converſation, in lying, and Contradiction to the Truth, either through meer Sport, or for trifling Conſiderations, or out of Malice and Envy towards Men; or with the Hope of obtaining ſome worldly good; or through Fear of ſome worldly Evil will venture to ſay, and tell Things which are either not known by them to be true, or even thoſe which they know to be falſe? How infinitely contrary to the Nature of God, and to his infinite Truth, are all ſuch Men? They poſſeſs not the Nature, or Image of God, but of the Devil. Our Saviour has told us that whoever ſpeaketh a Lie is of *the Devil, for he is a Liar, and the Father of it*, John 8. 44. And to ſhew us the infinite Contrariety of it to the Nature of God, the Apoſtle ſays,

ſays that it cannot be of God, or of that Truth which is of God. 1 *John* 2. 21. And ſuch Perſons are marked as neceſſarily and eternally excluded from Heaven, and baniſhed to Hell, with the Inventer and Father of Lies. Rev. 21. 27. *And there ſhall in no wiſe enter into it any Thing that defileth, neither whatſoever worketh Abomination, or maketh a Lie*: And 22. 15. *For without are Dogs*, &c. *And whoſoever loveth, and maketh a Lie.*

2. *Falſhood in Practice.*

Men are not only guilty of Falſhood and Lying in their Words, but in their Actions too. As Chriſt did not only bear Witneſs to the Truth by his Words, but in his Perſon, by his Actions, and all his Sufferings, and whatſoever he did in the World: So on the contrary, when Men live contrary to the Truth, when they act ſo as to contradict the Perfections of God: When they practically deny his Power and Godhead, his Holineſs, his Wiſdom, Authority and Goodneſs, or any of his Perfections; they then live a Lie, and declare that is Truth which is Falſhood; they act as if God had not ſent his Son to redeem Sinners. When they live as if this World was all they had to mind, and their chief Good; when they neglect the Concerns of their Souls, and getting an Intereſt in Chriſt; when they indulge their Luſts, and corrupt Paſſions and Affections; when they act as if the World, its Pleaſures and Profits, were better for the preſent than the Knowledge, Worſhip, and Love of God, Obedience to him, and Communion with him; then their Life is a Lie, and practical Declaration againſt the great eternal Truths which Chriſt came into the World to bear Witneſs to: So all ſuch Perſons, as they, are Sinners, and Liars, are infinitely hateful to God, and Chriſt; and as the Apoſtle ſpeaks of the gentile World, *change the Truth of God into a Lie*, Rom. 1. 25.

3. *Falſhood in judging about our State, and Relation to God, as if it was what it is not.*

When Men judge themſelves to be at good Terms with God, and that they are at Peace with him, while they are Enemies to him, and Haters of him; when their Hearts are at Enmity with him, and diſtant from him, i. e. they live

live in Hypocriſy, and make a deceitful Show of ſomething that is not in them, and which they are not, they live a Lie, and their Judgment is a Falſhood: When they profeſs to know God, and deny him in Works, and make a falſe Judgment about the Terms of God's Acceptance of them, as Hypocrites do, at leaſt ſome of them who deceive themſelves, they give God the Lie, and are hateful and abominable in his Sight, for all Hypocrites are ſo; and when he ſpeaks of thoſe who will be the Objects of his moſt terrible Wrath, he ranks them among Hypocrites, thoſe Liars and Self-Deceivers, *Matth.* 24. 51. *Elihu* ſays the *Hypocrites in Heart heap up Wrath.* Job 36. 13. Chriſt often pronounced the moſt terrible Woes againſt Hypocrites. This is ſuch a Falſhood and Lie in Life, as is infinitely hateful to the God of Truth. And two Conſiderations will farther evidence that all Falſhood is and muſt be ſo.

1. *It is always directly contrary to the eternal Nature of Truth.*

Truth and Falſhood are the Denial, and Contradiction of one another, and infinitely different. The Apoſtle ſays, *no Lie is of the Truth*, nor can it ever be. Now God is infinite, eſſential and eternal Truth; and conſequently muſt infinitely hate all Falſhood, and lying. Men oftentimes love to deceive others, and love to be deceived themſelves, and to be perſwaded that Falſhood is Truth: They many Times hate to know what is Truth, and don't chooſe to *come to the Light, leſt their Deeds ſhould be reproved.* This is the State of the World, i. e. The Temper of the natural unrenewed World; as Chriſt witneſſeth, *Joh.* 3. 19, 20. But God has an infinite Deteſtation of this: It is a Denial of the God that is above, of his eſſential Truth, and the Simplicity and Holineſs of his Nature, and of all that is good, and right, and fit in Man, and happy for him.

2. *It is contrary to the great Errand and Buſineſs of Chriſt into the World.*

Chriſt came to bear Witneſs to the Truth to free Men from the Deceits which ruined them, to convince them of the infinite Worth and Importance of Truth; to make them love it, and long for it, as their ſupreme Perfection, and deſire to be formed by it, and wrought into it. Now, Falſ-

hood is a Contrariety to this great Deſign of Chriſt's coming into the World, and therefore muſt be infinitely hateful to him, and to God. Can you think when Chriſt came down from Heaven in that Character he aſſumed here, and did and ſuffered what he did, and underwent here to bear Witneſs to the Truth, that after all he can be pleaſed with you if you have not the Truth in your Hearts, if you love Falſhood, are pleaſed with Lies, Self-Flatteries, Ignorance of God, Hypocriſy, deceiving and being deceived? Can Chriſt be pleaſed with you if you are not wrought into the Image of God, are not made Partakers of his Nature, and conformed to the Laws of unchangeable Truth, if you depend not on him for all Light, Wiſdom, and Grace, to be formed after the Image of God, and made like to him? No 'tis impoſſible! 'tis impoſſible the Son of God ſhould come here to bear Witneſs to the Truth, that Men might be recovered from Sin, from Unholineſs, and reſtored to the Image of God, and yet love, and be pleaſed with thoſe who remain in their natural Darkneſs, and Ignorance of the infinite Truth of God, and his divine Nature and Perfections? Can God love you when you have the Image of the Devil on you, are not renewed by the Spirit of Truth, and filled with the Knowledge and Love of it? Is there any Fitneſs in you to enjoy the God of Truth, and to find Happineſs in him? No! All this is an irreconcileable Contradiction. Sore Eyes will be as much comforted and refreſhed by looking on the Sun, as you in this State can be with the Hopes and Views of enjoying God, the Father and Fountain of Truth. If God takes Pleaſure in ſuch as you are, he muſt deny himſelf; and Chriſt came into the World in vain. Yea, his Witneſs to the Truth would be only ſo much greater Reproach to God, and Denial of his Nature.

USE 5. *Hence learn one Way to judge of your Friendſhip to Chriſt, and Intereſt in him.*

'Tis a Matter of infinite Concern to every one of you, to be intereſted in Chriſt, for there is no other Saviour, there is no Way of Salvation, but by and thro' Chriſt. No Sinner can ever be united to God, reſtored to his Favour,

Favour, Image and Love, but in and by him. Now, Chriſt is the King of Truth, he came to bear Witneſs to the Truth; and from this View of him, you have one Way to diſcover whether you are intereſted in him. A few Conſiderations drawn from this Topick, may be of ſome Uſe to help you in your Enquiries about this great Concern.

1. *Search and examine thoroughly, whether your are Enemies to Truth.*

If you hate the Truth, 'tis a certain Evidence you don't belong to Chriſt. If you make no Conſcience of the Truth, if you can eaſily tell or practiſe Lies, if you can willingly act againſt the Intereſts of Truth; if you are ready to betray, and give up Truth, for any other Advantage, you have nothing to do with Chriſt as your Friend and Saviour. Chriſt came to redeem the Slaves of Ignorance, Error and Blindneſs, from the Darkneſs of Sin, from the Power, and Love of Falſhood and Deceit to the Love of the Truth as it is in Jeſus. He that eaſily, and willingly parts with Truth for the Sake of any worldly Honour, or Pleaſure, or Intereſt, can part with Chriſt, and has no ſaving Intereſt in him, *He that doth Truth is of God.* And *he that is of the Truth heareth the Voice of Chriſt.* But he that doth Falſhood is of his Father the Devil. Conſider

2. *You may have a Sort of Love to many Truths, and yet be no Friends to Chriſt.*

Some Men love to ſee the Truths of Nature, and Philoſophy or thoſe which are called phyſical Truths, and ſpend moſt of their Days in the Study of them. Some would have other People ſpeak Truth, they love Truth in People's Bargaining, and dealing with them, yea they hate Lies and Falſhood in ſuch Matters, and ſcorn to tell Lies themſelves; they may hate Hypocriſy in other Men, or in Speculation, and love moral Sincerity in themſelves, and be much pleaſed with their Love to the Truth. Yea, many Men have a Sort of natural Love to many Truths of Religion; they love Temperance, Chaſtity, Juſtice, and Honeſty, and ſome Parts of Worſhip and Service, which are viſibly paid to God; for theſe Things ſerve the Welfare of human Society, and tend to promote Men's outward Comfort, and Happineſs; and

for many other natural, and moral Cauſes. Yea, Men may have a ſort of natural Love to the Doctrine of Salvation in ſeveral Parts of it; and may have their Affections greatly carried out towards Chriſt, to think of his Love in dying for them, and that he will bring them to Heaven, or make them happy for ever; and yet have no real Love to the Truth. *Jehu* had as much; And the Stony-Ground Hearers had ſuch a Kind of Love to the Truth of the Word, and yet were no Friends of Chriſt, but Haters of the Truth, and Enemies of the great End of Chriſt's coming into the World.

3. *Enquire if you hate, or are diſpleaſed with thoſe Truths that convince you of Sin, and of the Neceſſity of Holineſs.*

If when the Word of Chriſt comes cloſe to your Conſciences, and ſhews you your loſt and ruined ſtate, your Sinfulneſs, your Enmity to God and the utter Unlikeneſs of your Souls to him, and ſhews you your Need of Chriſt for your whole Salvation, or convinces you of your particular Sins, of your Hypocriſy, of the Falſeneſs of your Hopes, of the Vanity, and Inſufficiency of all your Endeavours to reſtore yourſelves to the Favour, or Image of God; when it lays open your Vileneſs, and the abſolute Need of infinite and ſovereign Mercy to ſave you; When the Truth croſſes your beloved Luſts, if then you feel and indulge a ſecret Indignation againſt it, if you are diſpleaſed, and offended with it, or offended with Men for telling you the Truth of God, and indulge your ſelves in Endeavours to hinder your Sight of it, in perſwading yourſelves it is the Truth, this is a ſad Evidence you are the Enemies of Chriſt. The Jews were well enough pleaſed to hear Chriſt tell them of *Moſes*'s Authority, of the Holineſs of their Law, and the Goodneſs of its Inſtitutions; and ſo were even the Scribes and Phariſees: But when he teſtified againſt their Hypocriſy, againſt their Corruption of the Law, and Departure from the Simplicity and Purity, and holy Deſign of its Inſtitutions, and of their Rebellion againſt the Light, and Hatred of the Truth, and of their Pride, Self-Righteouſneſs, and their unrenewed, unhappy State, then they gnaſhed their Teeth, and were filled with Indignation, and ſought to kill Jeſus.

4. *Enquire*

4. *Enquire if you love Chriſt becauſe he came to bear Witneſs to the Truth of God, which exalts him above all, and ſhows you your own true State.*

When Men love Chriſt, as bearing Witneſs to the Truth which exalts God as a Sovereign on his Throne, exacting the juſt Penalty of the Law, and fulfilling his Threatning for Sin, as a God of infinite Purity, Truth and Holineſs; and ſhowing the horrid Evil of Sin, their own Blindneſs, Nothingneſs and Ignorance, their intire Dependance on ſovereign, abſolute and infinite Mercy; undone in themſelves, but depending all on God in Chriſt, then they love to ſee God as he is, and themſelves as they are. They love Truth without Diſguiſe, and Self-Flattery: They love God as he is, and love his Honour ſincerely: This is therefore ſome Evidence that you are the Friends of Chriſt, and Lovers of the great Errand on which he came into the World.

5. *Enquire if you love Truth in Chriſt as the Image of God, and your Perfection.*

I enquire whether you love it for it ſelf, and as that which in its own Nature is infinitely amiable, flowing from the Nature and Attributes of God, the Origin of it, the Father of Lights, eſſential and eternal Truth? As that which exalts your Souls unto the Image of God, and makes you like him? The Union to and Poſſeſſion of which is the Glory and Perfection of Man? Do you love it all as it ſhines forth in Chriſt, and is manifeſted by him? Is the Truth commended to you as it is in Jeſus, and aſſimilates you to God, and makes you Partakers of his Nature? Does it attract your Love, and command your Souls with the greater Power and Sweetneſs, as it appears glorious in the Witneſs of Chriſt, uniting you to him, and exalting you to the proper Perfection, ſpiritual Freedom and Activity of your Natures. If you love it thus without Partiality to ſecular, worldly and carnal Intereſts, then you are Lovers of the Witneſs of Chriſt.

****

SERMON

SERMON IV.

CHRIST's Kingdom is in the Souls and Consciences of Men.

DOCTRINE III.

CHRIST's Kingdom among Men is in their Souls, and Consciences, and has nothing to do with their Bodies but by them. Or, *Christ's Kingdom among Men is in their Souls, and Consciences, and not over their Bodies, and outward State.*

Christ had told *Pilate* before, v. 36. *That his Kingdom was not of this World.* He is a King, and has a glorious Kingdom, but it is not of this World: It does not arise out of the Earth, or Sea, as the Kingdoms of this World do, Dan. 7. 3. Rev. 13. 12. *But the holy City comes down from God out of Heaven.* Rev. 21. 2. That Christ is a King is also plain from his Answer to *Pilate.* Again when he says, *my Kingdom is not of this World*: He implicitly affirms himself to be a King, though his Kingdom is not of this World. The Nature of his Kingdom is further explain'd by shewing here, that he is the King of Truth. In setting up, maintaining and keeping Possession of his Kingdom, he bears Witness to the Truth. Now as this can only be manifested in the Minds, and to the Consciences of Men, it is certain that his Kingdom subsists there.

But it will be needful to premise a few Things concerning the Nature of that Kingdom which is here spoken of; and then I shall consider the two *Propositions* which lie plainly in this Observation, viz.

1. *That Christ's Kingdom among Men is in their Souls and Consciences.* And

2. *That*

2. *That it has nothing to do with their Bodies but by them.*

I ſhall firſt premiſe ſome Things concerning the Nature of that Kingdom of Chriſt, which is here ſpoken of. And

1. *This is not that Dominion which as God he exerciſeth over all Creatures.*

Chriſt is as was before noted, properly, and truly God, eſſentially, and eternally God. He is the Creator, and Poſſeſſor of all Things, he muſt therefore have a ſovereign, abſolute and arbitrary Property in them, and Dominion over them, and ſo all Angels, Men and Devils are under his Command; They are governed by a myſterious, and uncontrolable Providence. He diſpoſes of the Lives, Wealth, and all the Comforts of Men as he will. None can ſtay his Hand nor ſay unto him, what doeſt thou? He ſets up Kings, and puts them down; he plants, and eſtabliſheth Nations; again, he diminiſhes them, brings them low, and daſheth them one againſt another. 1 *Chron.* 29. 11, 12. *Dan.* 4. 3, 17, 25, 32, &c. Our Lord bids *his Diſciples fear him who is able to deſtroy both Soul and Body in Hell.* Chriſt as he is God governs all Events in the World, and diſpoſeth of all the Circumſtances relating to the Lives, Eſtates, Happineſs, and Miſery of Men. In him we live, move, and have our Being, and from him we receive all our Comfort, and can have none without him. Therefore it is not in this Reſpect that I now ſpeak of the Kingdom of Chriſt among Men. Nor

2. *Is it that Dominion which as Mediator he hath over all Creatures for the Good of the Church.*

It was obſerved before, that the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is not only as God poſſeſſed of a ſovereign, and ſupream Dominion over all Creatures in Heaven, and Earth, but as Mediator, he has alſo received Power, and Authority from God over all Things in Heaven, and Earth. This Dominion he hath, and exerciſeth for the Sake of his Church, that he might be thoroughly furniſhed with all Power in his kingly Office to carry on the Deſign of his undertaking for the Redemption and Salvation of Men, to finiſh, and compleat that Deſign; to bring all his Redeemed to eternal Glory and put them in Poſſeſſion of the everlaſting Happineſs of Heaven:

Of-

Of this it is the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *Eph.* 1. 20, 21, 22. And 1 *Pet.* 3. 22. In this Office as King of the Church, and as Mediator, all Powers in Heaven, and Earth are made ſubject to him. And he muſt reign 'till he has put all his Enemies under his Feet: and hath brought all that God hath given him to the Glory which he hath purchaſed for them. But this is not properly that Kingdom which he hath among Men, and in his Church, of which I am now ſpeaking.

But this is

3. *His mediatorial Kingdom, and Government over the real true and proper Subjects of that Kingdom.*

This is iucluded indeed in the laſt Head mentioned, (His mediatorial Kingdom,) but not coextenſive with it. All Creatures are ſubject to him for the Good of his Church, i. e. of his Redeemed, but they are not all redeemed by him. Thoſe are and thoſe only are the proper Subjects of this Kingdom of Chriſt who are brought to true, ſincere, voluntary Subjection and Obedience to him; who of Choice ſubmit to his Laws, and are govern'd by them. This Kingdom of Chriſt is that which he has over thoſe who are redeemed, and will be eternally ſaved by him. Others are his Subjects by Force, but not govern'd by his Laws, nor own his Authority, nor ſubmit to him as their Lord. They are made Inſtruments to ſerve the Deſigns of his gracious Government by an over-ruling, all powerful Providence of his, and their Actions, State andCondition without their Knowledge, Deſign, or Conſent, and even againſt it, are made to ſerve the Deſigns of his ſpiritual Kingdom. But theſe ſubmit to him as their Lord, and Lawgiver, they take his Laws as the Rule of their Living, and yield free, and ſincere, and willing Obedience to his Terms of Life and Happineſs, he is their only Lawgiver, and they know him to be that one Lawgiver who is able to ſave, and to deſtroy, *Jam.* 4. 12. This is that Kingdom which he came into this World to ſet up, and with ſpecial Deſign to adminiſter; of which many Paſſages of Scripture ſpeak, as that Ezek. 34. 23, 24. *And I will ſet up one Shepherd over them, and he ſhall feed them, even my Servant David; he ſhall feed them, and he ſhall be their Shepherd. And I the Lord will be*

be their God, and my Servant David a Prince among them, I the Lord have spoken it.

These Things being premised, I now proceed to the two Propositions contained in the Doctrine, viz.

1. Prop. *This Kingdom of Christ is in the Souls, and Consciences of Men.*

The Kingdom of Christ has not Respect to the outward State and Condition of Men here, but to their eternal State and Condition hereafter in another World. To shew the Truth of the Proposition we may consider these Things.

1. *The Nature of this Kingdom is spiritual, and not worldly.*

The Laws of Christ's Kingdom are of a spiritual Nature so as no human Laws can be. They respect the inward Frame of Men's Minds, their most secret Thoughts, and Actions; and direct, and govern them. They require Faith in Christ, and an entire Dependance on him as the only Saviour, and universal absolute Submission to him as the supream, sovereign, almighty Lord, and Ruler. They require supream Love to God, and Jesus Christ, Repentance for Sin, Patience, Humility, and such proper Actings of the Mind, as are quite out of the Reach of all human Laws, and out of the Knowledge and Observation of Men. The Laws of earthly Kingdoms respect the Estates and Properties of Men, their Lives and Limbs; and require an outward, and visible Service to the Sovereign, and the State; and such outward Actions as have an outward Tendency to serve and promote a temporal, and worldly Interest, an outward Peace, and Prosperity; and this is their All; they can reach no further, for Men can see no further; but the Laws of Christ reach all the inward Motions, and Actings of the Heart: the Ends, Motives, and most secret Springs of Men's Actions, those which are most deeply hidden from Men, and fartheſt from all human Observation. They forbid the first Motions of Concupiscence or Lust in the Heart, they forbid an *evil Eye*, or every inordinate, and irregular Inclination of the Mind and Reach of Passion, and Affection; and require the regular, and spiritual Exercise of all the Powers, and Faculties of the Soul. It is therefore as Christ says, *Luke* 17. 41. *A Kingdom within Men.* It does

not consist in Meat and Drink, *but in Righteousness and Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghost*, Rom. 14. 17.

The Riches of this Kingdom are not of this World, they don't lie in Money, Lands, or Extent of Earth, in Cloathing, or Armour, in Fortification, Ships, or naval Strength, or Power, but they are all of a spiritual Nature; they lie in Faith and the Love of God, in Holiness, Purity, and Sanctity of Heart and Manners; and in the inward Joys of the Holy Ghost, the rich, enlivening Hopes, and Prospects of a spiritual State, of an heavenly, and eternal World. Those are the richest Subjects in this Kingdom, who have most Faith, and Love of God, most Humility, Patience, Self-Denial, and the greatest Weanedness from all Things in this World, and so are declared Heirs of a Kingdom. *Jam.* 2. 5. *Christ* himself *became Poor that through his Poverty he might make them rich*, 2 Cor. 8. 9. These Riches lie also in distributing the Goods of this World; in pious, and charitable Uses, and in doing Good with them: Not in amassing and hoarding them up, 1 Tim. 6. 18. *That they do Good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate.* These were and were the Riches of the Church of *Smyrna*, Rev. 2. 9. *I know* (says Christ) *thy Works, and Tribulation, and Poverty, but thou art rich.* The Riches of the Subjects of this Kingdom lie in the Proverty of their Spirits, in the Graces of their Souls, and in Heaven; not in this World. The Ministers of State in Christ's Kingdom, have not the State, and Power, and Spirit of this World, 1 Cor. 2. 12. *Now we have receiv'd not the Spirit of the World, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the Things that are freely given to us of God. The Weapons of our Warfare are not carnal*, 2 Cor. 10. 4. They have no Powers, but those of Teaching, exhorting, admonishing, admitting to, and separating from Christian Communion. These are the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. There are no Swords, or Axes, no Rods, no Prisons, no Fines, but spiritual Ones. No Dominion, or Lordship such as the Princes of the Nations assume over their Subjects, or their great Men exercise upon them. Matth. 20. 25, 26. *But Jesus called them unto him and said, ye know that the Princes of the*

the Gentiles exerciſe Dominion over them, and they that are great exerciſe Authority upon them ; but it ſhall not be ſo among you. But he adds, that the Way to be great there, *is to be the Miniſter* to the Service, and Faith of others ; *and whoſoever will be chief among you let him be your Servant.* Ver. 27. and Matth. 23. 9, 10, 11. *And call no Man your Father upon the Earth : For one is your Father which is in Heaven. Neither be ye called Maſters, for one is your Maſter even Chriſt, but he that is greateſt among you ſhall be your Servant.*---The Pomp, and Grandure of this Kingdom is not in Arms, and Robes, and gorgeous Array, not in Gold, and Pearls, and fine Linnen ; not in Troops, and Guards and numerous Attendants ; in coſtly Equipage, in glorious and ſhining Trappings, and Furniture. But 'tis all inward. The *King's Daughter* i. e. the Church, is *all glorious within. Her cloathing of wrought Gold,* Pſ. 45. 13, 14. But it is the Cloathing of her Soul with that heavenly Gold the inwrought Graces of the Holy Spirit. The Glory of the King is in the Grace, the divine Beauty, and Holineſs of his Perſon and Offices, and his Subjects anſwer that Glory in the Holineſs, and Purity of their Hearts, in the Riches of their Meekneſs, Humility, Patience, forgiving Injuries, deſpiſing of this World. In their Faith, Love, Joys and Hopes of a better Life. So that it entirely differs from all worldly Kingdoms, and muſt be a Kingdom in the Souls, and Conſciences of Men, not in their Bodies, and outward State.

2. *All the Guards, and Supports of this Kingdom are ſpiritual.* The *Weapons of Warfare* in this Kingdom *are not carnal but ſpiritual.* Chriſt never directed any ſecular Force to be uſed either to maintain, or advance it. He ſays *if his Kingdom was of this World then his Servants would fight.* Joh. 18. 36. But they had no Orders from him to do ſo becauſe his Kingdom was not from hence. No Armies are raiſed to conquer for him or to defend his Kingdom. No other Walls to fortify its Cities but his holy Laws to govern the Hearts, and Lives of his Subjects. No Weapons uſed to conquer Nations but the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt. His Subjects have no Guards, and Supports but Faith in Jeſus Chriſt, and through him the moſt humble and entire Confidence, and Repoſe in God : Abſtinence, Mortification, Patience

in Suffering, Self-Denial, taking up every Cross that lies in the Way, and following their Master. The prime Ministers in this Kingdom were the twelve Apostles, who were poor Fishermen sent out to conquer Provinces, and subdue Nations, and Kingdoms to the Obedience of their Master; they had no Weapons but preaching the Gospel of a crucified Saviour, and the Examples of an holy, mortified, self-denying Life. No Powers but what were derived from the divine Spirit operating, in and by them. Nor are there any other Supports of it. Men are no more to be kept in Obedience than brought to it, by Soldiers, Arms, and Swords, but only by the Laws of the Gospel, the Promises, and Threatnings, the Fears and Hopes of eternal Things, which are all future and out of Sight of this World. *We walk by Faith, and not by Sight.* So all the Motives to Obedience are fetch'd from an unseen, and eternal World. 'Tis true, as the Apostle says, *Godliness hath the Promise of the Life that now is, and of that which is to come.* 1 Tim. 4. 8. But that Promise is not of great Things, 'tis not of Happiness, or Pleasures here, but only of Grace to bear, and to enjoy the World as it comes with Contentment, and Thankfulness; and to leave all to the Wisdom and Grace of Christ to order just as he pleases. He plainly told his Disciples, that in *the World they should have Tribulation*, John 16. 33. And all *that will live godly in Christ Jesus, must suffer Persecution*, 2 Tim. 3. 12. The Promises Christ made of good Things in this World, *was with Persecutions*, Mark 10. 30. He that don't take up Christianity with this View, and Expectation, is none of Christ's Disciple. Mat. 10. 37, 38. and Luke 12. 26, 27. *If any Man come to me, and hate not his Father, and Mother, and Wife, and Children, and Brethren and Sisters, yea, and his own Life also, he cannot be my Disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his Cross, and come after me, cannot be my Disciple.* The Motives of Christianity are fetch'd from Heaven. The Promises of it are of invisible Things, unseen Comforts; heavenly and eternal Things after this World is over, of Grace and Glory, and great Things to come, *which Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, nor hath it entred into the Heart of Man to conceive*, 1 Cor. 2. 9. But no great

great Things are to be expected here, no outward Glories or ſenſual Pleaſures, but all Manner of Diſcouragements and Difficulties, not only ſuch as are common to other Men, but many that are peculiar to Chriſtians, on Account of their Religion; which will ariſe from the Evil of their own Hearts, the Malice of the Devil, and the World: Their Maſter promiſes them no Exemption, but plainly bids them expect theſe Things, and look for their Reward in Heaven. So alſo the Terror of Diſobedience are not from this World. There's no Diſadvantage by refuſing Subjection to Chriſt, or Rebellion againſt Him, but the Anger of the great God; being ſhut out, and baniſhed from his Love, and Favour, and Mercy. There are no Halters, Fines, Impriſonments, Whips or Tortures but thoſe of Hell, and the eternal Torments of damned Sinners. Theſe are the Life and Death, the Bleſſing and Curſe which the Goſpel ſets before Men; if theſe don't prevail there are no other to be uſed. Mark 16. 15, 16. *And he ſaid unto them, Go ye into all the World and preach the Goſpel to every Creature. He that believeth and is baptized ſhall be ſaved; but he that believeth not, ſhall be damned.*

3. *The Tendency and Deſign of this Kingdom is all of a ſpiritual Nature.*

Chriſt himſelf never aim'd at any Thing in this World. He never ſought the Pomp and Power of the great Men of the Earth, nor aim'd to ſet up a ſecular Dominion. The carnal Jews did expect that the Meſſiah when he came, would free them from the Roman Yoke, and ſet up a temporal Kingdom, that would triumph over all the Kingdoms of the Earth, and in this low and carnal Senſe they underſtood the Propheſies of the glorious ſpiritual Reign and Dominion of Chriſt. A Number of them offered to *proclaim Him* King, and *would by Force have taken and made him a King, but he departed and hid himſelf from them.* Joh. 6. 15. He was ſo far from any ſuch Deſign, that He who was Lord of all Worlds, had not a Place on the Earth *to lay his Head in.* He had no Fields, Vineyards, Gardens, Palaces, and Revenues, nor a Cottage in the World. He ſought not the Honours of Men, but the Honour which

cometh

cometh from God only. He was to conquer Sin and Hell, to ſpoil Principalities and Powers, to triumph over Devils, and all the Enemies of God. But this he did by Suffering and Dying, not by Fighting. And he has accordingly forbid his Diſciples ſeeking any Thing in this World. They are to look for no great Things here. Their Buſineſs is not to hunt for Riches, and Honours, and Pleaſures in this World, but to deſpiſe them, and deny themſelves, and be ready to part with even all the lawful Pleaſures and Comforts of the World at any Time. They are indeed to fight, and run, and wreſtle, and watch, and labour Day and Night, but 'tis with the Devil, the Fleſh, and the World. Theſe are all the Enemies they have to fight with. The Struggle they muſt maintain, is not for the World, but againſt it: Not that they might be rich, and eaſy, and live joyfully here, but that they might not at any Time be enſnared and captivated by the Riches, and Pleaſures, and Honours of the World: That their Hearts might not at *any Time be over-charged with Surfeiting, and Drunkenneſs, and the Cares of this preſent Life:* Luke 21. 34. Inſtead of indulging the Fleſh, and worldly Deſires, and the Gratification of ſenſual Appetites, their Work is to mortify and crucify them all, to ſubdue them, to keep under their Bodies, and bring them into Subjection. Their Enemies are ſpiritual Enemies, they have no other to ſtrive with. Eph. 6. 12. *For we wreſtle not againſt Fleſh and Blood, but againſt Principalities, and Powers, againſt the Rulers of the Darkneſs of this World; againſt ſpiritual Wickedneſs in high Places.* And the Weapons of their Warfare are ſpiritual too; ſee Ver. 11. 12. *Put on the whole Armour of God, that ye may be able to ſtand againſt the Wiles of the Devil;* which ſee to the 18th Ver. And 2 Cor. 10. 3, 4. *For though we walk in the Fleſh, yet we do not war after the Fleſh, for the Weapons of our Warfare are not carnal, &c.* The Kingdom they are to fight for is the Grace and Glory of Heaven; not the Glory of this World. And all the Tendency of the Rule, and Government of Chriſt, is to overcome Men's Unbelief, and Blindneſs, to mortify their Luſts, and bring under their worldly Appetites and Deſires; to deliver them

them from this present evil World, to make them live above it, and look beyond it, as having nothing here, *No continuing City, nor abiding Place, but seeking one that is to come.* They are to live not after the Fashion of the World, but after an heavenly Manner, as Citizens of Heaven; whose Hopes, and Treasures are all transmitted there. Now all this Design must be managed in the Soul and Mind of Man. The Views of unseen Things can be apprehended only by the Mind, 'tis this that looks to them, and not the Body; the Hopes of them are only in the Mind; The Soul is the only Seat of Faith, and Hope, and Love, and Joy and Desire, and all Purity must spring from Principles in that. The Soul and Conscience is the Seat of Wisdom, Knowledge, Humility, Charity, Patience, and all such Views and Prospects as the Kingdom of Christ propounds and sets before Men.

4. *The Subjects of this Kingdom are those which are born from another World, and bound for it.*

The Subjects of Christ are not like those of other Princes, natural born, or Subjects because born within his Dominions or Territories; they are not of this or that Nation, or Country, but only such as are new-born, regenerated, and made heavenly by the renewing of the Holy Ghost. Nothing else brings any Man into the invisible, and real Kingdom of Christ. They who are of this Kingdom are dispersed up and down upon the Earth in diverse Places, Kingdoms, and Countries in the World; but they are not of the World: They are not the Darlings of it, nor taught, careſs'd, pamper'd, and indulged by it: But chosen out of the World, *John* 15. 19. They are not govern'd by the Wisdom of the World; they are not under the Influence of its Policies and Maxims; but being taught from above, they act in a different Way. They learn all the Wisdom and Knowledge they have as Christians, from Christ alone; from his Word, and Spirit, through the Regeneration, Light and Influence of the Holy Ghost. John 3. 3, 7.---*Jesus answered and said unto him, verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a Man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God. That which is born of the Flesh is Flesh, and*

and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit. All they learn from this World as such, respecting their Living, their Enjoyments, their Hopes or Conduct is foreign to the Kingdom of Christ; but whatever they have as Christians, they receive from above; they are call'd out from the Customs, Fashions, and Life of the World to live unto God; the Object of their Faith, and Hope is from Heaven, and in Heaven. They are not Christ's because they are great, or rich, or learned, or any Thing of that Kind, but because they believe in Christ the Lord from Heaven, a crucified Saviour, and trust God in him for all their Happiness, which is all in an invisible God and invisible Glory. As they are born from Heaven, so they are bound for Heaven; thither they look, there they lay up their Treasures, and declare that they *seek a Country*, Heb. 11. 14. Christ's Subjects here are far from their Home, their own Country, and the Place of their Rest, to which all their Actions as Christians tend. They are labouring to be ready for Heaven, to grow in Faith, in Love to God and Christ, to enjoy some Tastes, and Glimpses of the heavenly World; and to have some Sight by Faith of the Felicities of that. Their Obedience is with a View with *Moses*, to the Recompence of Reward. They deny the World, the Lusts, and the Pleasures of the Flesh, and the Joys of Life, they suffer the Pains, the Sorrows and Burdens of the World, in the Views and Prospects of a better, expecting through Grace the Reward of all their Toils, and Labours, not here, but in Heaven. Therefore it is that none of these *Things move them, neither do they count their Lives dear to them*, Acts 20. 24. And while they see Things working towards Heaven they faint not nor are discouraged, 2 Cor. 4. 16, 17, 18. *For which Cause we faint not, but though our outward Man perish, yet the inward Man is renewed Day by Day. For our light Affliction which is but for a Moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory: While we look not at the Things which are seen, but at the Things which are not seen: For the Things which are seen are temporal, but the Things which are not seen are eternal.* It must be confess'd that those who are the true Subjects of Christ do too often find Discouragement

ragement from the World ; I mean give Way to what they meet with from it and are ready to sink under it ; and take Encouragement to many Actions of their visible Religion from it. But then it must be remembred that this is their Infirmity, and so far as they do so they are not Subjects of Christ but of the World, which has too great a Mixture with their Religion. But as Christians, and so far as they are such, they are not of this World, but born from Heaven, and bound thither, Religion is their Business, and God, and Christ, and Holiness, and Heaven their Happiness. So that all the Kingdom of Christ, as such, and what he came into the World to set up, is Religion, and the Seat of this is no where but in the Souls, and Mind of Men. Christ's Empire is therefore over Souls, and Consciences. Faith, Hope, and Love are abiding Principles in the Soul, as the Apostle speaks, 1 *Cor.* 13. last. And these govern the rest of Christians Actions. These are exercised on Things not seen, as the Anchor which entreth into that which is in the Vail.

2. Prop. *The Kingdom of Christ is not a Kingdom over Men's Bodies and outward State;* Or, *it has nothing to do with Men's Bodies and outward State, but by their Souls and Consciences.*

This is a wide Difference between the Kingdom of Christ and the Kingdoms of this World. They have nothing to do but with Men's Bodies, and outward and worldly Estate. Whereas Christ's Kingdom has nothing to do with them but by their Souls and Consciences. It is manifest that the Laws of Christ respect Men's outward Actions, as well as inward. The Acts of Justice, Righteousness and Charity are the Acts of the whole Man, and have respect to the outward State and Condition of other Men. The Virtues of Chastity, Sobriety, Temperance, Moderation, and such like, are outward as well as inward. So the Acts of Worship, as Prayer, Reading, Hearing, celebrating Sacraments, and some other Acts of Worship, are Acts of the whole Man; in which the Body as well as the Soul is concerned. The whole Man is redeemed by Christ, and is all to be devoted to him. 1 Cor. 6. 20. *For ye are*

bought with a Price: therefore glorify God in your Body, and in your Spirit, which are God's. Rom. 12. 1. *I beseech you therefore Brethren, by the Mercies of God, that ye present your Bodies a living Sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable Service.* Christ's visible Church are such as visibly and outwardly profess to be his Subjects, and act outwardly as if they believed on him, hoped in him, and performed other spiritual Acts of Obedience to Him. But these outward Acts in themselves are not that Religion, and Obedience which Christ requires. Nay of themselves they have no Religion in them. And therefore Christ has nothing to do with them but as they are the Fruits, and Expressions of the Heart, as they are the Language, and Index of the Mind and Conscience; and outward Declarations of the inward Frame, Temper, and Actings of the Soul. If they are not so they are so far from having any Religion in them, or the Nature of the Obedience which Christ requires, that they are hateful to him, being only the visible Resemblance, the Pretence, and feigning of Religion, i. e. They are Mockery, and Hypocrisy, Falshood, and Lies, and belong not to the Kingdom of Christ, but of the Devil.

But to shew the Truth of the Proposition I shall propose a few Things to be considered.

1. *Christ utterly disclaimed all temporal Dominion over Men.*

When our Lord was in the World He never assumed any Authority about the worldly Concerns, Estates and Honours of Men. He did not claim any Thing to himself that was of a temporary Nature, but renounced, and disclaim'd it. Accordingly, when one came to Him to divide the Estate between him, and his Brother, He utterly refused to have any Thing to do with it, *Luke* 12. 13, 14. rejects the Proposal with, *Man who made me a Judge, or a Divider over you?* Though he immediately improves the Motion to a spiritual Purpose, and takes hold of it as an Occasion to warn all against Covetousness. " ‡ In Matters

‡ *Henry* in loc.

" of

" of a worldly Nature Christ would neither assume a Le-
" gislative Power and alter the settled Rules of Inheritance,
" or a judicial Power to determine Controversies concern-
" ing them. This Case was now *Corum*, not *Judice*, and so
" Christ dismisses his Bill. If the Man had come to Christ
" to desire his Assistance in his Pursuit of the heavenly In-
" heritance, he would have given him his best Help; but
" as to this Matter he will have nothing to do with it.
" The Constitution of his Kingdom is altogether of a spi-
" ritual Nature. Christianity leaves the Matter as it found
" it as to civil Power. It obliges all to do justly according
" to the settled Rules of Equity; but Dominion is not
" founded in Grace. It does not encourage our Ex-
" pectation of worldly Advantage by Religion. If a Man
" expects that in Consideration of his being Christ's Disci-
" ple, he should give him his Brother's Estate, he is mista-
" ken: The Rewards of Christ's Disciples are of another
" Nature." He has also renounced all secular Pomp, Ho-
nour and Dominion for his Disciples as well as himself. Matth. 20. 25, 28. And this from his own Example: *Even as the Son of Man come not to be ministred unto, but to minister, and to give his Life a Ransom for many.* His Laws require Men to be strictly, and universally just, righteous, honest, and faithful, in the several States that divine Providence sets them in. But he has settled no Rules for particular Cases about these; they are as the Laws of human States, and Governments have determined them, founded on the Law of Nature, and the general Rules of the Word of God: The Constitutions of civil Government being entirely of a different Nature and Design, than the Constitution of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. The Laws of Christ respect Heaven, and the Holiness, and Happiness of that; but he has utterly renounced all temporary Dominion and Greatness both for himself and his Disciples; therefore his Dominion is not over the Bodies, and outward Condition of Men, but their Souls and Consciences, of which he is the only supreme and absolute Lord.

2. *All the visible and outward Obedience which Christ requires, is no other than the natural and necessary Expres-*

ſion of the inward Submiſſion, and Obedience of the Heart.

There are a great many Laws of Chriſt which require a viſible, outward Worſhip of God; Ordinances inſtituted by him both for ſecret, ſocial, and publick Worſhip; As Prayer, Reading, Preaching, Hearing the Word, Adminiſtrations of Sacraments. So there are Laws requiring Acts of viſible Obedience, or ſtrictly enjoining the Practiſe of all moral and Chriſtian Vertues. But all theſe as they are outward Acts of Worſhip, or Obedience, are to be nothing elſe but the viſible Expreſſions and Declarations of the Frame, the Temper, and Diſpoſition of the Soul. For Inſtance, when we pray to God in ſocial Prayer, we are only to utter, and expreſs the Deſires, Reſolutions, Thoughts, and Motions of our Hearts in a Way agreeable to the revealed Will of Chriſt. When we attend Sacraments, we are therein viſibly to profeſs our receiving Chriſt, and the Graces of his Spirit and the Benefits of his Redemption on his own Terms, and Offer; and giving up the ALL of our Souls to him on his Call, Covenant, and Encouragement. So when we do a viſible Act of Charity, 'tis an outward Profeſſion, and to be a Fruit of our Love to our Neighbour for the Sake of God and Chriſt, and a Deſire to honour Chriſt and imitate him in doing Good, and to relieve, and help his Members, or thoſe he has bid us love, and care for, for his Sake. In all Acts of Worſhip, and Obedience, our Bodies are no other than the Inſtruments, and Organs of our Souls, and to be uſed by them to declare the real Actings of our Hearts: As our Words are to be the Index or Manifeſtation of our Minds, and nothing elſe but viſible and audible Thoughts; Therefore we find God, and our Saviour do ever in the firſt Place require and demand our Hearts, Prov. 23. 26. *My Son, give me thy Heart.* Our viſible Devotion is to be the outward Declaration of the Faith, Hope, Love, Joy, Delight, and Deſire of our Soul. Our outward Acts of Obedience in all moral, and Chriſtian Vertue is to be the genuine Effect of a real Deſire to pleaſe, and honour God, and to expreſs the inward Complacency of our Minds in his Will, and Deſire of entire Conformity

Conformity unto it. The Obedience therefore which God declares himself pleased with is, then, when it is performed with all the Heart. 1 Sam. 12. 20, 24. *Yet turn not aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your Heart. Only fear the Lord and serve him in Truth with all your Heart.* 1 Kings 8. 23, 48. *Lord God of Israel, there is no God like thee, &c. Who keepest Covenant, and Mercy with thy Servants that walk before thee with all their Heart. And so return unto thee with all their Heart, and with all their Soul.* So Praising and Prayer is to be with all the Heart. Psal. 86. 12. *I will praise thee O Lord my God with all my Heart.* Jer. 29. 13. *And ye shall seek me, and find me when ye shall search for me with all your Heart.* Hence we have such innumerable Directions and Encouragements to Sincerity of Heart, and Declarations that that Obedience which flows from such an Heart and Spirit is only acceptable to God, Prov. 15. 8. *The Sacrifice of the Wicked is an Abomination to the Lord: But the Prayer of the Upright is his Delight.* Chap. 16. 2. *All the Ways of a Man are clean in his own Eyes, but the Lord weigheth the Spirits.*

The Obedience of Christians is *called a speaking the Truth in Love*, Eph. 4. 15. And the Service we do in the meanest Condition is to be *in Singleness of Heart as unto Christ.* And therefore all the outward Honour and Obedience which Christ requires of his Subjects, is no other than such as the Conscience guided by his Word makes necessary, or is the proper and natural Language and visible Expression of the Meaning and Intention of the Mind; The Declaration of that Faith, Love, Reverence, Desire, and Delight in God, which can be seated only in the Soul.

3. *All outward and visible Obedience which does not flow from the Heart, or is not the true and proper Language of it, Christ accounts Mockery, and Hypocrisy.*

If a Man could perform all the outward Acts of Worship and Obedience which the Bible requires from the Beginning to the End of it, and not do them from Faith in Christ, and Love to God, and not express by them the Thoughts, Desires and Actings of his Soul, they would be so far from being that Obedience which Christ requires, that they would be

be a mocking of God, and hateful to him. These outward Acts ought to be no other, and in Religion are design'd to stand for nothing else, but to be Representations of a Man's Soul, and the Acts of that. And when they are not so, they are in their own Nature, a Lie, and false Pretence of something within, which is not there; therefore the Lord abhors them, and reckons those false Pretences the vilest Wickedness: See this Interpretation of it, Psalm 78. 34----37. *They returned and enquired early after God. And they remembred that God was their Rock, and the high God their Redeemer, nevertheless they did flatter him with their Mouth, and they lied unto him with their Tongues, for their Heart was not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his Covenant.* And the same Exposition our blessed Saviour gives of it, Luke 16. 15. *Ye are they which justify yourselves before Men; but God knoweth your Hearts: For that which is highly esteemed amongst Men is Abomination in the Sight of God.* And the same the Apostle gives, Gal. 6. 3. *If a Man thinketh himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.* Christ requires the Heart, the Soul, the Will, Affections, and Desires. He is Lord of the Conscience, and sees all the Recesses of the Heart. Now when a Man performs all outward Obedience and Worship, but it does not come from his Heart, he practically denies the Omniscience of Christ, while he puts before him a Shew and Pretence of something for the Reality; and so he belies his own Profession: And all this, be it more, or less, whatever it pretends to be of Religion, instead of being that which Christ requires, is entirely different from it, yea infinitely contrary to it. And those same Actions which when they are the Language of the Heart, and flow from it, are pleasing and acceptable to God and Jesus Christ, and a true Obedience to him; when they do not, are reckon'd the most flagrant and abominable Impiety, and threatned with the severest Damnation of Hell.

4. *All that visible Worship and Obedience to Christ which proceeds, or flows from any worldly Motives, is no Religion, but Hypocrisy.*

All

All the Motives of Religion which Christ has propounded, are taken from the other World, and not from this. He never encouraged Men to the Obedience of the Gospel with the Hopes of being rich, or great, or being easy, and prosperous here, No! He told them all that no such Thing was to be expected by his Disciples. He warned them not to be discouraged by all the Evils of the World, the Terrors of this Life, or the Fears of Death. Neither the Goods nor Evils of the World were to be the Motives of their Obedience, but the Views of the divine Perfections, and the Hopes and Fears of Futurity. Now if Men believe in Christ, and act under the Influence of Faith in him for the Fulfilment of his Promises, and executing his Threatnings, they act from the Motives he bids them; But if they do the same outward Actions from any worldly Motives, that's no Obedience to Christ at all; nay 'tis Disobedience, 'tis Rebellion, and Hypocrisy. Christ has bid Men pray to him, and to the Father through him. He requires their Attendance on his publick Worship and Ordinances: Now if they do this because Christ commands them, because they believe in him, and know his Authority, and eye the unseen and eternal Things he has set before them, to engage them to these Duties, they are his good Subjects. But suppose you should do these same outward Actions with the same Strictness, the same visible Devotion, and as constantly, and altogether as well to see to, because if you did not, the Magistrate would punish you, imprison, fine or whip you, or put you to Death; or because if you do them, you shall receive some temporal Reward, get a Sum of Money, a good Place, or be well spoken of, and commended, you are in all this a Mocker of God, and a Hypocrite. The same outward Actions done from the Motives which Christ sets before you are religious, holy, and good Actions, but done, and performed from the Motives of this World are carnal, selfish and hypocritical Mockeries of God and Jesus Christ. Therefore 'tis certain Christ never proposed his Kingdom should be over the Bodies and outward State of Men, in any other Way than through and by their Consciences, and their Hearts.

Men's

Men's Souls must be his, and all the rest must be govern'd by those divine Principles which govern'd them.

USE I. *Hence learn that the Kingdom of Christ is no ways dangerous to the Kingdoms of this World, nor hurtful to the temporal Interests of Men.*

The Clamour which the Jewish Priests and Rulers made against Christ to prejudice *Pilate*, and prevail with him to put him to Death was, That his Pretences to a Kingdom were dangerous to *Cæsar*'s Empire. *For he that made himself a King spake against Cæsar*, and therefore if *Pilate* did not put Christ to Death *he was no Friend to Cæsar.* And the like Clamour has many a Priest and Ruler since that Time made against Christ and his Followers, if not with as much Hypocrisy, yet with as little Truth and Sense. For Christ's Kingdom is quite of another Nature from the Kingdoms of this World. 'Tis no ways dangerous to the Rights of Kings and Princes, it leaves them as it finds them in the Possession of their Earthly Thrones, and Crowns, and Honours; and all Mankind in the full Enjoyment of all their natural Rights, and all the good Things which by the Laws of Nature they may claim. It leaves Nations and People to enter into such Compacts and Combinations about their civil Properties and Priviledges as they please, consistently with the Laws of Nature and the general Welfare of Men, and the true Peace and Comfort and Liberty of Mankind: Yea it helps them to a better Enjoyment of these good Things. The Laws of Christ's Kingdom require Men to be subject to them whom God has set over them, and to *render to all their Dues: Tribute to whom Tribute is due, Honour to whom Honour, Fear to whom Fear, to owe no Man any Thing, but to love one another*, Rom. 13. 7,8. To be just and righteous without Reserve, and to be good and kind to all; and in all Things. Christ indeed makes no great Promises of Goods in this World, and foretells his Disciples, they will meet with many Evils, and be hated of all Men for his Sake: But then he deprives No-body of what God by the Laws of Nature, or his Providence gives them: And he teaches his own Disciples to bear all that comes with Patience

Patience and Humility, and *to see that none render Evil for Evil unto any Man, but ever follow that which is Good both among themselves and to all Men*, 1 Thess. 5. 15. The same Lesson Christ himself most strongly enjoins upon them, Mat. 5. 39. 44. *But I say unto you, That ye resist not Evil: But whosoever will smite thee on thy right Cheek, turn to him the other also: and if any Man will sue thee at the Law, and take away thy Coat, let him have thy Cloak also; and whosoever shall compel thee,* &c----- *Love your Enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.* In short, the Kingdom of Christ has nothing to do with this World as such; nor with the Bodies and Estates of Men, but by their Souls and Consciences, obliging them in all Times, Places, and Conditions to act as reasonable and religious Beings. And if this interferes with any Man's Rights, then Man's Nature contradicts itself, and the God, and Author of Nature.

USE II. *All the outward Obedience Men can pay to Christ, is not enough to make them true Subjects of his Kingdom, or to prove them so.*

Its possible Men may pay all the outward Worship, and visible Obedience which the Gospel requires, from outward Causes, and worldly Motives and Considerations, their Souls may be herein influenced by their Bodies, and their Senses: Their outward Condition, and worldly Relations may perswade and prevail with them to do all this. And when they have done, it is all nothing akin to the Subjection which Christ requires of them. He reigns in the Hearts and Consciences of his Subjects, and rules their Bodies only by ruling in their Souls; when these are subdued to Christ they will always govern the Body, and outward State, and devote and consecrate all to Christ. But when the Body, and the World rules the Soul, this is the Kingdom of this World, and not the Kingdom of Christ. When Men are inclined from the Fears, or Hopes of this World, to worship God, to pray to him, to own Christ, or to attend on his Ordinances; or to do justly, to live soberly, temperately, and the

like, they may be good Politicians and act cunningly, but they are no Christians.---- And since Men may do all the outward Duties, and outwardly practise all the Virtues of Christianity, from bodily and worldly Motives, and Views, or from meer outwardly moral Causes, therefore all such Religion will not make any Man a true Subject of Christ, nor prove any Man in the World to be so. He may notwithstanding all that, be a rotten Hypocrite, and a Subject of the Devil, a Servant of his Belly, and his Lusts. His Body, and his worldly State must be governed by his Conscience, and his Soul, and these governed by Christ, or else he belongs not to the Kingdom of Christ.

USE III. *Hence we learn that no Person can be a Subject of Christ who is not freely so.*

Jesus Christ is the King of the Conscience and Souls of Men, and these can't be forced, or compelled. Herein the Kingdom of Christ differs from all the Kingdoms of the World. Men are Subjects of earthly Kings because they are born in their Country, and can't help it ; and they are forced to yield their Bodies, and Estates to their Government, and when they outwardly yield Obedience to their Laws, they are good Subjects in a civil Sense, and answer the Design of the Laws, for they can reach no further. But they can't be true Subjects of Christ without their Consciences submit to him, for he is Lord of them, and his Laws reach all the Thoughts and Intents of their Hearts as much as their Bodies and outward Actions. And these are never subject to him unless from the Dictates, and Directions of their Minds, those must be free, and of Choice. They are willing Subjects or none. *Christ's People are a willing People*, or, *Voluntaries*, as the Hebrew is, Psa. 110. 3. They have freely of Choice and with an hearty Consent given all their Souls and Consciences, and therefore their All to be guided, governed and directed by Christ. Herein is the Glory of Christ's Kingdom that he is King of Hearts. He reigns in the Heart, he subdues his Subjects by captivating their Souls to himself.

USE IV.

USE IV. *Hence we have Reaſon to fear that Multitudes who fancy they are good Chriſtians, and are thought ſo by other Men, are no real Chriſtians at all.*

Since the Kingdom of Chriſt is within Men in their Souls, and Conſciences, therefore they are no true Chriſtians, who are only outwardly Chriſtians: Now what Multitudes are there of whom there is Reaſon to fear that they have no other Religion but what is outward and bodily. They do a great deal of ſuch Service for Chriſt: They eat and drink in his Preſence; they hear him teach in their Streets; they attend his Worſhip; they pray, and ſing, and talk much; they profeſs to own him as their Lord, and to own no other but him; they give much of their Eſtates to ſupport his Worſhip, and the Honour of his Kingdom; they live ſoberly, temperately, chaſtly, yea they are juſt, true and honeſt in all their Dealings; they walk regularly, and act over all the Outſide of Religion as fairly to ſee to as the beſt; they ſeem to give Chriſt all but what they ſhould give him, and that is their Hearts. They think themſelves very good Chriſtians, and others think well of them too: But Chriſt don't live and reign in their Souls. The Principles, and Springs of their Religion are not Faith in Chriſt, and Love to God. Their Souls don't lead and guide their Bodies, and outward Actions into the Service of Chriſt; but ſome temporal Reſpect to worldly Good and Advantage; ſome bodily and outward Proſpects guide their Souls and hale them along in the Exerciſes of Religion. Men's Bodies and outward Intereſts are capable to govern and influence their Minds in Religion, as well as in other Things: And when it is ſo, all Men's Religion is vain, 'tis not the Religion of Jeſus Chriſt; his Kingdom is not in them: For he has no gracious Dominion over Men if it be not in their Souls. Such Men may drive a good Trade for the World and their Luſts by their Religion, but they have nothing more than good Policy, and worldly, or carnal Wiſdom in all they do; and their Reward is all in Hand, that find no Profit in their Religion but what they have at

preſent : They are not dealing for Heaven, but for this World. The Scribes and Phariſees did ſo, and they had their Reward, *Matth.* 6. begin. What Pity is it that Men take ſo much Pains to deceive themſelves ; when they do all the Outſide of Religion with as much Diligence, Labour, and Conſtancy as if their Hearts were in them, when their Hearts are quite out of the Caſe, and they act from worldly and temporary Conſiderations, or meerly from animal and ſelfiſh Deſigns ; and ſo the ſame outward Actions which if they had been done from the Heart, and a purified Conſcience would have been good and holy Actions, prove nothing but carnal Wiſdom, and meer Hypocriſy.

USE V. Of Examination. *Whether you are the true Subjects of Chriſt* ?

He has a great many viſible and profeſſed Subjects, where he has but few true and good ones. It greatly concerns you all to be ſatisfied in this. 'Tis of infinite Importance that you be really what you pretend to be ; for notwithſtanding the viſible Likeneſs of nominal and real Chriſtians, there is as wide a Difference as there is between the Subjects of Chriſt, and the Slaves of the Devil.

Let me mention two or three Things to help you in your *Examination.*

1. *Have you freely, and underſtandingly choſen Chriſt for your King and his Obedience for your Service* ?

Since Chriſt reigns in the Soul and Conſcience, you may be ſure the Religion which he requires is not a blind Obedience, 'tis the moſt free and choſen Acting ; the moſt reaſonable Service of the Mind. Have you choſen Chriſt, and underſtandingly made your Choice, and known what Sort of Service and Obedience he requires ? Have you choſen that holy and divine Service which the Goſpel requires ? Do you eſteem his *Precepts concerning all Things to be right, and therefore hate every falſe Way*? Or would you be glad it might be otherwiſe, and that your Bodies, and ſenſual Appetites and worldly Intereſts might have been ſerved without ; but ſince they can't, all Things conſider'd, you will

will rather yield than not have ſuch and ſuch worldly Ends anſwer'd, or an Happineſs ſeparate from God ſecur'd ?

2. *Having known what Sort of Subjection Chriſt requires, have you unreſervedly given up your Souls and Bodies to him ?*

Luke 14. 26. *If any Man come to me, and hate not his Father, and Mother, and Wife, and Children, and Brethren and Siſters, yea and his own Life alſo, he cannot be my Diſciple.* You may for ſome Conſiderations give up all your Eſtates, and worldly Intereſts, yea and your Bodies to be burned, but if the Fire of Love be wanting, and all this is not conſecrated to Chriſt out of Choice, and from a Principle of Love to him, and his Will, if your Souls are left behind after all you are none of Chriſt's, 1 *Cor.* 13. 3. You muſt be all Chriſt's, and have no other Maſter, you muſt be given to him without Reſerve, both in Body and Spirit, which are his.

3. *Is all the Trade you drive in Religion for Holineſs and for Heaven ?*

If you aim at the Honours of this World, the Eſteem of Men, at Riches and worldly Comforts and Advantages, this dead Fly ſpoils all the Ointment. If you ſeek any Happineſs of your own but what lies in the Honour of God by Chriſt, in the Purity of your Souls, and their Conformity to the Image of God, you are in all your Religion dealing for Self and the World. The End of all your Religion muſt be the Glory of God and the Redeemer in the Perfection of your own Souls, in their greateſt Purity and neareſt Likeneſs to the moral Attributes of God and the divine and holy Joys of an heavenly World.

***

SERMON V.

The Way to promote the Kingdom of Christ is by the Evidence of Truth to the Minds of Men.

IV. OBSERVATION.

THE Kingdom of Christ can be promoted no other Way but by the Evidence of Truth to the Consciences of Men.

I desire it may again be remembred of what Kingdom I am now speaking, which I have before told you, is not the Kingdom of Christ, as he is God, nor that Kingdom which as Mediator he has over all Creatures in Heaven and Earth, for the Sake of the Church; but it is the Kingdom he exerciseth in, as well as over the Church, and for it, over those which are the real and gracious Subjects of his mediatorial Kingdom; over godly and holy Persons; that Kingdom he came to purchase and set up in the World; which are not of the World, but taken out of the World, which are so to be led, and guided and govern'd, as to be made Heirs of Glory, and at length, brought to the Possession of the Kingdom of Heaven.

1. *I shall in the first Place explain what is meant by promoting the Kingdom of Christ.*

To this let it be answered in a Word: All that which tends to bring Men to Faith in Jesus Christ, to make Men truly

truly godly and religious, or increaſe them in Holineſs, and true Obedience.

To promote the Kingdom of Chriſt is not to do that which may prevail with Men to make Pretences that they are Chriſtians, or that they own Jeſus Chriſt as their Saviour, and to call him Lord, Lord, when really he is not ſo. Men ſo perſwaded, may not only be under the abſolute Government and Dominion of Chriſt as they were before, and will be whether they will or no, but they may belong to his viſible Kingdom alſo. And there are many Things beſides Truth, or the Evidence of Truth which may promote this. Temporal Rewards or Puniſhments may do this, without any Knowledge or Apprehenſion of Truth in thoſe who ſo profeſs, or pretend to be the Subjects of Chriſt; and ſo the Kingdom of Chriſt as 'tis viſible in the World, may be promoted by ſuch Means as are oppoſite to the true and real Kingdom of Chriſt. The Halters, Whips, Racks and Fines, and other Tortures of the Romiſh Inquiſition, may greatly tend to make Men profeſs Chriſtianity in any Form, and pretend to be what they are not, the true Subjects of Chriſt; but this don't at all promote the real Kingdom of Chriſt, becauſe it only makes Men Hypocrites, and Liars, which is entirely contrary to the Nature, and Deſign of Chriſt's real Kingdom among Men.---- There may be alſo ſome Sort of promoting this Kingdom of Chriſt by Men's being brought into the Way of receiving the Evidence of Truth, when the Thing itſelf which brings them there, does not give any Evidence of it; as when by the Providence of God a Man breaks a Bone, or is taken ſick, he may by Means of that, be put into, or confin'd in a Place where he may receive that Light and Evidence. And ſo many Acts of Providence which Men call Caſualties, may be Means of promoting the Kingdom of Chriſt. So a Man's being caſually in a Place where he hears ſome Paſſage of the Bible, or ſome other good Book, or hearing ſome Word, or Diſcourſe, may be the Occaſion of his coming to the Knowledge of the Truth and brought to Faith in Chriſt; yea his being forcibly conſtrain'd to be in a Place may be an Occaſion of opening Conviction

Conviction to his Conscience, and so be an accidental Means, or *Causa sine qua non*, of his being made a Subject of Jesus Christ; but it is only the Light and Evidence of Truth that is the proper Means of overcoming him to become a Subject of Christ: The other has no natural Tendency to promote this: The other is only an Occasion, and as to us an Accident, overruled by the Providence of God, beside the Nature of the Thing, to be a Means of his Conversion. But that which only brings a Man to be a Christian, or a true Subject of Christ, is the Manifestation of the Truth to his Conscience. And by his Conversion the Kingdom of Christ is enlarged, a new Subject is added to it, and so it is promoted. And by his Increase in Grace and Holiness, a Subject of Christ becomes strengthned, enriched, and made a better Subject than he was. So that gracious and proper Kingdom which the Redeemer came to purchase and set up in the World is promoted; and in this Sense I am now only speaking of its Promotion or Advancement, which can be no other Way but by the Increase of his Subjects, or their Strength and Riches; i. e, their Grace and Holiness.

2. *I shall now in the next Place, endeavour to shew the Truth of the Observation, and this I shall do under three Heads.*

1. *Because the Kingdom of Christ is within Men, or in their Hearts and Consciences.*

2. *Because it is a Belief of, and Obedience to that Truth, which Christ came to bear Witness to.*

3. *Because the Term, and Life, and true Nature of that Obedience which Christ requires, is that it be a chosen and willing Subjection to him.*

1. *Because the Kingdom of Christ is within Men, or in their Hearts and Consciences.*

Our Saviour himself says this, Luke 17. 21. *The Kingdom of God is within you*; not among you, as some render it; but in your Hearts and Consciences; which has been shewn in the former Discourse. Now it must follow from hence, that it can be set up no Way but by Light and Truth

Truth in the Conſcience, and the Evidence of that. Indeed Falſhood may govern the Minds of Men, and certainly it often does. For the Kingdom of the Devil is propagated, ſupported, and maintain'd by it. And if the Kingdom of Chriſt was a Rule, and Government contrary to Truth, its being in the Soul of Men would not prove that it muſt be the Evidence of Truth which promotes it, or makes any Man a Subject of it: But this is out of the Queſtion. The Kingdom of Chriſt is a Kingdom of Truth. His Laws are Truth, the Obedience He requires is a Conformity to Truth, and He came to bear Witneſs to the Truth. And except Truth itſelf, there is nothing but the Appearance, the Pretence, and ſhadow of Truth which can ever govern the Underſtanding. Truth is the proper Object of the Underſtanding, and whenever it is governed by Falſhood and Lies, it is thro' miſtake, and ignorance, embracing that for Truth which is not ſo, and taking Errors and Falſhood for, and inſtead of Truth. When the Devil deceived our firſt Parents, and brought them and their Poſterity into his Kingdom, it was by deceiving them, and perſwading them that Falſhood was Truth, that Evil was Good, that Darkneſs was Light: So it is evident that when Men live under the Government of Sin and Satan, when they live in the Kingdom of Darkneſs, it is becauſe they are blinded, and miſtake Error and Falſhood for Truth; and perſwade themſelves that they are governed by Truth, and following Good, which in that Caſe is pretended to be offered to the Underſtanding inſtead of Truth, the proper Object of it. Wherefore the Kingdom of Chriſt in the Souls and Conſciences of Men, can never be ſet up but by the Truth, and the Evidence or Manifeſtation of it to them. The practical Judgment, or Underſtanding and Conſcience, is that Faculty by which Truth is perceived, apprehended, and determined, and the Will follows that; ſo that if Truth is not diſcerned by the Mind, the Will never can, nor will be bowed to Chriſt, who is the King of Truth, and whoſe Government is in the Soul. The Soul can never be made obedient to him but by the Sight or Apprehenſion of Truth: Till it ſees the Truth, it is de-

ceived by Error, miſled by Falſhood, and that makes it a Subject of the Devil, who is a Liar, and the Father of Lies. But when the Mind diſcerns Truth, it will preſent it to the Will, as the proper Object of its Choice, Love and Purſuit; and when the Will embraces it, and the Affections cloſe with it, then the Man is ſubjected to Chriſt, and becomes obedient to him; gives up himſelf to him, to be guided, led, and ruled by his Spirit and Truth, and made conformable to his Image and Will. The Body and the Senſes can never diſcern Truth: 'Tis the Mind which ſees and judges of that, and there the Kingdom of Chriſt is where the Soul is poſſeſſed of that Truth which he witneſſes, and ruled by it: This is agreeable to that Account the Apoſtle gives us, 2 Cor. 3. 18. *We all with open Face, beholding as in a Glaſs, the Glory of the Lord, are changed into the ſame Image from Glory to Glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

2. *Becauſe the Kingdom of Chriſt, or that Subjection which he requires is, a Belief of, and Obedience to the Truth which he came to bear Witneſs to.*

What that Truth is you have heard before. And no Man is a Subject of Chriſt who is not obedient to that Truth which he teſtifies and declares. This is the Scope of all the Goſpel and Law of Chriſt, to bring Men to Faith in Chriſt, and a Dependance on him, as he is declared in the Goſpel, *the Son of God with Power*; the alone Saviour of the World, the great Prophet, and Teacher of all divine Truth; the glorious King of it; and the great High-Prieſt of his Church, and therefore to give Entertainment to all that Truth which he has teſtified, John 1. 12. *But as many as received him, to them gave he Power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe on his Name.* And Chapter 3. 33. *He that hath received his Teſtimony, hath ſet to his Seal that God is true.* 1 John 5. 5, 9, 20. *Who is he that overcometh the World, but he that believeth that Jeſus is the Son of God? If we receive the Witneſs of Men, the Witneſs of God is greater: for this is the Witneſs of God, which he hath teſtified of his Son. And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an Underſtanding that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jeſus Chriſt:*

This

This is the true God, and eternal Life. So Obedience to the Truth which Chriſt hath taught, is required of all Chriſtians as the Obedience of the Goſpel, in this Light, as the Truth of Chriſt. Matth. 7. 21. 24. He ſhall enter into Heaven, and he only, Chriſt ſays, *who doeth the Will of my Father which is in Heaven. Therefore whoſoever heareth theſe Sayings of mine, and doth them, I will liken him unto a wiſe Man which built his Houſe upon a Rock.* And the contrary Similitude and Reaſon for it in the 26 Verſe. Heb. 5. 9. *And being made perfect he became the Author of eternal Salvation to all them that obey him.* Heb. 12. 25. *See that ye refuſe not him that ſpeaketh,* &c. No Subjection but this is an Obedience to Chriſt, nor is any Man a true Subject of Chriſt who does not believe in him and obey his Doctrine, and his Teſtimony. Therefore his Kingdom can be promoted no Way but by the Evidence of his Truth to the Conſciences of Men; no Man will ever become a true Subject of Chriſt or be kept ſo by any other Means. Here we may conſider

1. *It is impoſſible any Man ſhould believe in Chriſt who does not ſee the Evidence of that Truth which is the Object of his Faith.*

Faith in the ordinary and general Meaning of the Word, is the Aſſent of the Underſtanding to a Thing as true: but as it is a ſaving, or gracious Act, it includes alſo the Conſent of the Will to the Goodneſs of that Object, or divine Truth to which the Mind aſſents. The Underſtanding can't be brought to yield its Aſſent to any Truth, which it does not ſee to be Truth, or apprehend the Evidence of. Faith is ſuch an Act of the Soul, as can never be forced upon a Man by any Thing but the apprehended Credibility of the Thing believed. All the Allurements and Rewards of the World, Riches, Honours, Crowns and Kingdoms --- nor all the Terrors and Tortures of Earth can ever make any Man believe a Propoſition to be true, if his Mind don't apprehend the Foundation or Evidence of its Credibility; nay he will not be a Jot the more perſwaded of it for all the exterior Force in the World, or all that the whole World can poſſibly do to him. If you ſhould hire with Cart-loads,

or Ship-loads of Gold and Silver, if you ſhould whip him, impriſon him, or burn him, you can't make him believe a Thing to be true while he apprehends it to be incredible, or which he ſees no ſufficient Reaſon to believe. All the Perſwaſions and Intreaties of the World can't alter the Aſſent of his Mind. When a Man don't ſee the Evidence that Chriſt is the Son of God or the Saviour of Sinners, or that the Goſpel is the Word of God, or divinely true, you can no more perſwade him to believe it, or to believe in Chriſt, than by Intreaties, or Blows, or Careſſes you can perſwade a Stone to walk, or a Tree to fly. Faith as an Aſſent of the Mind is yielded only to the Evidence of Truth, and it is never to be moved, or driven, or drawn by any Thing elſe. Therefore when Chriſt appears to a Man's Mind to be what the Goſpel ſays he is ; when the Word of God appears to be divinely true and certain, he can't help believing. He can no more withhold his Aſſent when the Truth appears, than he could yeild it before; only the Evidence of Truth can gain his Belief, and when that appears, nothing can hinder it. Neither can the Conſent of a Man's Will be gained but when the Underſtanding preſents Good to it, either real or imaginary ; a Man can't chuſe, and love, and delight in any Thing that does not appear to him to be Good; or which appears to be Evil ; but while it appears Evil to him he will hate it, and have an Averſion to it. But when he apprehends it to be good, he will no longer be hindred from loving it, chuſing it, deſiring, and conſenting to the Goodneſs of it. A Man will believe ſo long as he ſees the Ground of Credibility, and ſo firmly, and no more. When a Man diſcerns that Jeſus Chriſt is that glorious Perſon which the Word of God declares him to be, that his Teſtimony is divinely true, and the Goſpel-Way of Salvation by him is divinely good and excellent, then he will believe ; 'till then all the World can't make him believe ; and when he ſees that, all the World cannot hinder him from believing. Accordingly the Pſalmiſt ſays, Pſal. 9. 10. *They that know thy Name, will put their Truſt in thee.* To that Ignorance, and Want of the Knowledge of the Truth, or the Want of diſcerning the Evidence of it, Chriſt attributes

the

the Unbelief of the Jews, when he quotes that terrible Paſſage of *Iſai. Ch. 6. 9.* Wherein he foretells their judicial Blindneſs, and applies it to them: *Matth.* 13. 14, 15.

2. *There can be no Obedience to the Truth of the Goſpel, without knowing or believing it as the Truth of Chriſt.*---

The very Form and Life, the Eſſence and Soul of all Goſpel Obedience, is Faith in Chriſt, and Love to him. Theſe muſt be the Principles and Springs from whence it all flows; therefore the Apoſtle ſays, *Heb.* 11. 6. *Without Faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God.* And we are aſſured, it is ſuch a Faith as worketh by Love, no other Obedience will do, *Gal.* 5. 5. So that all kind of Obedience (if there could be any that might be called ſo) which does not flow from a Conviction that it is the Will of Chriſt, and a Deſire to pleaſe him, and Honour him in it, is no Obedience to Chriſt. A Man may without Queſtion do an Action which is outwardly and materially the ſame with what the Goſpel requires, and yet there will be no Religion in it. A Perſon may attend on the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, eat the Bread, and drink the Wine in it becauſe other People do ſo, or becauſe he may get the Credit of being eſteemed a Chriſtian by that Means; or for other Cauſes, and yet this is no Obedience to Chriſt. A Man may give a Crown to feed a poor Man, becauſe he is his Neighbour, or a good tempered Man, or becauſe he is in Diſtreſs, and an Object of Compaſſion, and yet have no Reſpect to Chriſt in it: now though the outward Act is the ſame as in a Chriſtian who ſees the Truth, and the Will of Chriſt in it, and acts from Faith in him, and a Deſire to pleaſe and honour him, yet the firſt of theſe is no Obedience, and the laſt, is true, ſincere, and gracious Subjection to Chriſt. A Man may by meer Accident (as to himſelf) do the ſame material Action, which a Chriſtian does graciouſly, and yet in that Caſe he is ſo far from acting religiouſly, that he does not act humanely, and reaſonably. He is not a Cauſe by Counſel. 'Tis abſolutely impoſſible there ſhould be any true Obedience without a Belief in Chriſt, as the Lord who requires that Obedience, and a Love of him, and deſire to pleaſe him in it. And 'tis impoſſible there ſhould be either of theſe unleſs

leſs the Truth appears to the Conſcience, and the Mind apprehends his Authority, the Obligation of the Law, as the Law of Chriſt, and the Goodneſs of the Obedience, as pleaſing and honourable to Chriſt. The Truth which Chriſt has teſtified is the Matter, --- and Chriſt, as diſcovered in that Truth, the Object, both of Faith and Obedience; and unleſs the Underſtanding ſees the Evidence of that Truth, it can't perform the Obedience, any more than it can believe the Truth. If a Man ſhould caſually ſtumble on the ſame Actions, or do them out of Love to Man, or himſelf, or his Luſts, or in Compliance with the Inclination of ſome-body elſe, he is then a Subject of that Perſon, or of his Luſts, or of himſelf, but no Subject of Chriſt: He yields Obedience to other Men or to himſelf, but none to Chriſt; and unleſs he ſees the Evidence of the Truth of Chriſt which ſways and influences his Mind and Conſcience, 'tis impoſſible he ſhould; It cannot elſe be the Obedience of his Heart and Conſcience, and ſo is no Obedience to Truth or to Chriſt.

3. Argument to prove the Obſervation is, *That it is eſſential to the Subjection which Chriſt requires, that it be a willing and choſen Subjection to the Truth as it is in Jeſus.*

Chriſt will have no preſt Men in his Kingdom, they ſhall be *all Voluntaries*, as it is *Pſalm* 110. 3. It is utterly inconſiſtent with the Nature of the Obedience of the Goſpel that it ſhould be a forced Subjection. Men muſt of Choice, and with the free Conſent of their Wills, give themſelves up to Chriſt. No Man can be a true Chriſtian, who does not with the free and full Conſent of his Heart, take Chriſt for his King, and give up his whole Self to him to be ruled by his Laws, as good, and fit, and beſt. No Man is a Subject of Chriſt who does not make the Laws and Will of Chriſt his Choice, and deſire to be govern'd by them, and to live in Subjection to the Will of Chriſt, as good, and fit, and beſt to be the Rule of his Living, and the Way to his Happineſs. A forced Obedience to Chriſt, is no Obedience; 'tis in Terms a Contradiction. Chriſt draws *Men with the Cords of Love, and the Bands of a Man,* Hoſea

Hoſea 11. 4. Our Lord has himſelf expreſly determined this Point, John 14. 15, 21, 23, 24. *If ye love me keep my Commandments. He that hath my Commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me :----If a Man loveth me, he will keep my Words ; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our Abode with him. He that loveth me not, keepeth not my Sayings.* This is the Commendation the Apoſtle gives the believing *Romans*, as the Proof and Evidence of their being truly Chriſt's Diſciples, Rom. 6. 17. *Ye have obeyed from the Heart that Form of Doctrine which was delivered you.* Or, as 'tis in the Greek, *Whereto ye were delivered.* There's no Coaction, or Compulſion in the Obedience of a Chriſtian, 'tis a choſen Obedience. And here let it be conſidered

1. *That all external Compulſion is utterly inconſiſtent with Freedom of Choice.*

Whatever a Man is perſwaded or prevailed on to do by any outward Motives he does not chuſe, but only chuſes thoſe Things which are uſed to be the Motives of his Perſwaſion ; if a Man was hired by a Sum of Money, to inliſt himſelf a Soldier under an Officer, he does not therein chuſe to be a Soldier, or chuſe that Officer for his Commander, but he chuſes the Sum of Money which hires him : If he was threatned with a Priſon or an Halter, if he did not own the Pretender to be King, and ſhould thereby be perſwaded to do ſo, he would not therefore chuſe the Pretender as his King, but he chuſes to eſcape the Priſon, or Death. So if a Man was threatned if he did not obey Chriſt, he ſhould be fined or ſet in the Stocks, and therefore pretended to obey Chriſt, this would be no Choice of Chriſt for his Lord, but a Choice not to ſit in the Stocks, or part with his Money. All external Force whatever is inconſiſtent with the Freedom of a Man's Mind; ſo far as it has any Influence upon him, it perverts and biaſſes his Mind from it, and bribes it from its proper Freedom, and native Liberty of acting, and inſtead of forwarding his Chriſtian Obedience, it hinders it, and turns him aſide from the View and Conſideration of the proper Motives of his Actions. To compel a Man to love, and chuſe

an

an Object is a Contradiction in Nature. You may force a Man to say, or pretend he loves a Person, or an Object, but you cannot force him to do it. But so far as you try, you either prejudice him against it, or bias, and pervert his Judgment, and prevent his seeing, or attending to that which is amiable, and deserves his Love ; you blind his Mind, and perswade him he loves the Object, when he only loves something that you offer to move him to love it. Now since Christ and his Obedience are to be the Objects of Love and Choice in every Subject of Christ or every Christian, hence all exterior Force and Compulsion thereto, either by temporary Punishments, or Terrors, or worldly Rewards, is inconsistent with, and contrary to the Kingdom of Christ.

2. *The Light and Evidence of the Truth and Goodness of Christ in its own Nature, draws the Soul to him, and makes it willingly yield to him.*

There is an irresistible Power and Force in Truth, and good when it appears to the Mind ; there is in it a Power that cannot be withstood. When Truth is manifested to the Mind, the Understanding can no more help yielding to it, and giving its Assent, than the open Eye can help seeing Light when the Sun shines. The Will cannot but chuse Good when it is presented to it by the Understanding as good : This is its objective Happiness, and it goes after it as naturally and necessarily as Fire goes upward, or Water goes downwards ; it must do so or else a Man may formally and understandingly will and chuse his own Misery, and yet notwithstanding herein the Man acts the most freely and fully, consents to and chuses Truth and Good in Proportion to the Evidence and Certainty in his Mind, and the Importance and Worth of them to his Happiness. Though it is natural and necessary for the Mind to act thus, and it must act inconsistently with that Nature which the Author of its Being gave it to refuse : And a Man acting thus, it seems must not only be a wicked Creature, but must cease to be a Man. Hence when the Truth of Jesus Christ, the Truth of the Gospel, the Truth which Christ came to bear Witness to, shines into the Mind, and the

Goodness

Goodneſs of Chriſt and his Truth appears to it, the Soul will love him, embrace him and yield all itſelf up to his Obedience, and it can't help acting with the greateſt Freedom, and moſt hearty Choice and Conſent, when it does thus. From all which it muſt follow, that the Light and Evidence of Truth on the Minds and Conſciences of Men, is the effectual, and the only Way of promoting the Kingdom of Chriſt, and ſubduing the Hearts of Men to his Obedience.

USE I. *Hence we may learn, that Abundance of Men are greatly miſtaken in their Endeavours to ſerve the Kingdom of Chriſt; or their Pretences to ſuch Endeavours.*

If Chriſt's Kingdom among Men can be promoted no other Way, but by the Evidence of the Truth to the Souls and Conſciences of Men, then all Men who take other Ways to promote it, misjudge about it, and take wrong Ways to advance it.

Particular 1. *All ſuch as endeavour to conceal the Truth from Men.*

Thus the Papiſts deal with Mankind, they will not let them have the Bible, nor hear many Truths contained in it, leſt, as they pretend, they ſhould miſunderſtand them, and make an ill Uſe of them; acting from a falſe and ridiculous Maxim among them, *That Ignorance is the Mother of Devotion.* And many of other Denominations of Chriſtianity ſeem willing to hide ſome Truths of Religion from Men, leſt their Minds ſhould be prejudiced againſt the reſt for the Sake of them which are moſt diſagreeable to their Luſt or carnal Reaſon, and reckon they will be more likely to become Chriſtians if they don't underſtand ſome of the Truths of Religion. Now this is quite contrary to the Way which Chriſt took to make Men Chriſtians. He came to bear Witneſs to the Truth, and to manifeſt it to the Conſciences of Men. He thought the beſt Way to ſet up his Kingdom, was plainly to make known, and clearly to to teſtify all the Truths of the Goſpel. And if Chriſt was not miſtaken, thoſe Men moſt certainly are, who take a very different Method to advance his Kingdom from what

our Lord himself took, and came from Heaven for. The Kingdom of Christ is in the Souls and Consciences of Men, in their Belief of, and Obedience to the Truth as it is in Jesus, in giving up all their Souls and Consciences, and Lives to Christ, and the divine Truths which he testifies: And this they never will, never can do, if this Truth is unknown to them, or not manifested to their Consciences. How prepostrous then and ridiculous is it to endeavour to bring Men into this Obedience by hiding from them that Truth which they are to obey, to make them love something which they know nothing about, and to believe that to be true and good which they can't believe at all, to overcome their Prejudices, and conquer their Ignorance by keeping them in Ignorance? This Way will serve well enough to make Men believe they are good Christians, when they are Fools and Hypocrites, and know not what Christianity is. But 'tis the Light of Truth that brings Men to be the Disciples of Christ; 'tis Ignorance that hinders them from coming to him, and obeying him; and makes and keeps them the Subjects of the Devil. Christ conquers by Truth, and *he rides prosperously because of the Truth*, Psal. 45. 4.

2. *Such as mingle the Truth with Error and Falshood.*

The Apostle in the 1st of *Romans* 18. tells us of some *who held the Truth in Unrighteousness*. They imprisoned or shut it up that it should not influence their Lives, or conquer their Lusts; and this they did by mixing it with Errors and corrupt Fancies of their own. When Men endeavour to make Men Christians by teaching them some Truths, and mingling some Falshoods and Errors with them, they make another Sort of Religion than Christ has instituted and revealed, a Sort of mungrel Christianity, a Religion like that of the Heathen Pollitheism and Idolatry, in which some Notices of the Being, and Perfections of God were given, but divided from the Unity and Simplicity of his Nature. As when Men teach, that our Salvation all comes by Christ the Son of God, and the only Saviour; but that our Faith and good Works are the meritorious Cause of our obtaining Salvation by Christ, and that our good Works

and

and Obedience ſhall be accepted inſtead of the Fulfilment of the Law ; or that our moral Virtues and good Works and final Perſeverance in them, are the Conditions or material Cauſe of our Juſtification : Or when Men mix other Errors with ſome Truths of the Goſpel, they make a new Religion ; it is not the Religion of Jeſus Chriſt, their Diſciples ought not to be call'd Chriſtians. In all Caſes where ſuch Errors corrupt the great eſſential Doctrines of the Goſpel, the Followers of them want a new Name to be coin'd for them ; Such as are endeavouring by ſuch Ways to promote Religion, are not advancing the Kingdom of Chriſt which is only promoted by the Evidence of the Truth which he came into the World to bear Witneſs to, not by the Corruption of them.

3. *Such as uſe every Kind of Artifice to perſwade Men to Chriſtianity, beſide the plain naked Truths of Jeſus Chriſt.*

How ridiculous and aſtonſhing is it for Men to endeavour to perſwade others to be Chriſtians by Flatteries and Allurements of the World? To tell them fine Stories what good Things they will have here, or to encourage them with Hopes that Religion will not very much croſs their worldly Luſts and Deſires, that it is no great Thing which is expected from them, if they will live ſoberly and honeſtly in the World, and carry themſelves well ; there is no great Need of being very much diſtreſſed about Sin, or in any great Pain and Anguiſh of Conſcience for their loſt undone Eſtate by Nature ; no great Need to be much troubled about the Unlikeneſs of their Souls to God, and their utter Unfitneſs for Communion with him ; nor to ſee and mourn over the Enmity of their Hearts againſt him, and their Contrariety to the infinite Purity of the divine Nature, and to labour, and watch, and pray Day and Night, to run and wreſtle, to ſtrive and fight againſt Sin and the Luſts of the World? Or that if they do but believe in Chriſt they need not be concerned about Holineſs and the ſtrict Conformity of their Hearts to the Nature and Image of God, nor be any farther troubled about their Sins. Or to tell them that if they are perſwaded that the Goſpel is the Word of Chriſt, and that Chriſt came to ſave Sinners, they need not diſtreſs

themſelves about getting any other Faith. For Men to endeavour to leſſen the Strictneſs, Purity and Univerſality of the Law of Chriſt, or to colour over and ſoften the Terrors of the Law denounced againſt all Unbelivers, and impenitent Sinners; and to draw them to be Chriſtians by outward Kindneſs, and to repreſent Chriſtianity as little more than meer good Nature; when Men uſe ſuch Kind of Artifice to perſwade Men to be Chriſtians, they quite miſtake the Mark. 'Tis the plain naked Truth told to their Conſciences that muſt bow them to the Yoke of Chriſt, if ever they be bowed to it.

Truth appears moſt amiable in its own native Charms and Force, undreſſed, and without Colour or Artifice. If the Force of plain Truth will not ſubdue Men to Chriſt, nothing will. The other Way may make Men Hypocrites, but not Subjects of the Kingdom of Chriſt.

USE II. *Hence we learn that many by their endeavours to ſerve the Intereſts of Chriſt's Kingdom, do greatly diſſerve it.*---

Inſtead of many Ways which might be taken Notice of, whereby Men do ſo, I ſhall only mention three.

1. *Such as uſe external Motives to induce Men to be Chriſtians.*---

It has been the Art of Men of all falſe Religions in the World to act in this manner; and it is too common a Thing for thoſe who go under the faireſt Name, and beſt outward Denomination of Chriſtians, to act after ſuch a Manner as People of falſe Religions think neceſſary to promote their Religion. Beſure Men are always eaſy to believe that they think right themſelves---Every *Way of Man is right in his own Eyes*, *Prov.* 21. 2. And it muſt be as eaſy for them to believe that all who are not of their Mind, think wrong, and ought to be of their Mind. And as Matters of Religion are of the greateſt Importance, they think there is great Need to take Abundance of Pains to bring them to be of their Mind, which they believe is to think right: And no Doubt many are from hence led to uſe outward Motives to perſwade or oblige Men hereunto. Chriſt tells his Diſciples, that *they that killed them would think they did God good*

good Service. Joh. 16. 2. Men often perſwade themſelves they are advancing the Kingdom of Chriſt, and bringing much Honour to him when they are uſing outward Motives, and worldly Perſwaſions to make Men Chriſtians. Hence it is that you ſhall find them ſometimes earneſtly perſwading others that if they became Chriſtians, and yield Obedience to Chriſt, i. e. believe and act as they think is pleaſing to Chriſt, they will have great Reputation, Eſteem, and Honour among Men, and be much in Favour with great and wiſe Men, that they ſhall have ſuch and ſuch Places of Profit and Honour, and Advantages in the World; that they ſhall have Protection and Security from their Enemies. But on the other Hand, if they do not obey Chriſt, and ſubmit to his Laws and Orders, i. e. if they do not believe and practiſe what they believe to be Chriſtianity, they will be left without Protection and Defence; they will have no Favour from the Government under which they live; that they will have no Favour, and Eſteem of Men in Power and Authority, but will looſe their Reputation with ſuch. Yea that they ſhall be puniſhed, fined, impriſoned, whip'd; their Eſtates confiſcated; their Families brought to Beggary; they ſhall have no Employment in the State, nor Encouragement in Trade and Buſineſs, and the like. And Men think by theſe Methods they are doing admirable Service to Chriſt and his Kingdom, but Chriſt will never thank them for all ſuch Service; all ſuch Methods are directly againſt Chriſt and the Intereſt of his Kingdom, however ſpecious they look, they can do nothing to advance Religion, but are the moſt likely Means to advance the Kingdom of Satan: They tend to make Men Hypocrites, to induce them to embrace what other Men call Chriſtianity, and practiſe what others teach them is Obedience to Chriſt, againſt their Conſciences; or, at beſt, without any Conſcience, or knowing whether it be right or wrong. Theſe Methods carry ſufficient Conviction, that ſuch a Faith and Obedience will pleaſe thoſe who uſe theſe Arts with them, but they give no Conviction that it will pleaſe Chriſt: They never do, nor never can give any Light to the Underſtanding, but rather prejudice the Mind

Mind againſt Truth, and receiving Light. And if the Things be never ſo right, which they are perſwaded to, yet if they receive and practiſe them from theſe Motives, they are juſt ſo far Hypocrites, and the Subjects of their Luſts and of the Devil, and not of Chriſt who came to bear Witneſs to the Truth, to conquer Men, and bear Rule in them by the commanding Power of the Truth. It's not only ridiculous, and nonſenſical to hire, and perſwade a Man by outward Motives to love Chriſt, and to ſcare him by worldly Terrors, to obey Chriſt; but 'tis contrary to the Nature of Chriſt's Kingdom, for it tends to hinder a Man from loving and obeying Chriſt, and to perſwade him that he does love and obey the Truth when he only ſerves his Belly and his Luſts; It turns off a Man's Mind, and Attention from the proper Objects and Motives of Religion, to the Objects and Conſiderations of this World, which are entirely foreign from it. You will eaſily ſee this if it be brought to a particular Inſtance. All Chriſtians own that the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is a poſitive Rite and Inſtitution of Chriſtianity, and ought to be attended, and celebrated in Remembrance of the dying Love of the Redeemer, and that it might be a Seal of all our Chriſtian Engagements to God, and Expectations from him by Chriſt; and of the myſtical and ſpiritual Benefits of the Death of Chriſt, and the Covenant of Grace. Now ſuppoſe a Perſon ſhould be perſwaded that if he diligently attended this holy Sacrament three, or ſix Times in a Year, or in this or that Place, he ſhould be a Juſtice of the Peace, and he therefore does it with all the viſible Devotion in the World, 'tis eaſy to ſee that in all this he has done no Duty to God nor ſerved Chriſt, but hereby he has been purchaſing the Office of a Juſtice of the Peace. Again, it is a Duty both of natural and inſtituted Religion, that a Man ſhould pray in his Family. Now ſuppoſe you ſhould be perſwaded that if you did not twice a Day pray in your Family you ſhould pay a Fine of five Pounds at the Year's End, and therefore you ſhould pray twice every Day in your Family, you have not been worſhipping God, and ſerving Chriſt in it, but praying that you might ſave five Pounds; juſt

ſo

ſo far as worldly Motives influence Men's Religion, juſt ſo far they are Hypocrites, and have no Religion at all.

2. *Such as declare, and teach* UNCERTAINTIES *for the Truth of Chriſt.*

Chriſt came to bear Witneſs to the Truth, and to make it manifeſt to the Conſciences of Men; the great, eternal Truths of God, his Nature, Being, Attributes, and Providence, his Power and Grace, to ſhow them the curſed Nature and Miſery of Sin, to ſhow them a Saviour, and the Way of Salvation; not to tell them doubtful Stories, or feed them with Ambiguities and Uncertainties. And it is the Manifeſtation and Evidence of theſe great Truths to their Minds that makes them Chriſtians, and brings them into Subjection to the Kingdom of Chriſt. Now when Men declare doubtful and uncertain Things as Matters of Importance, or Truths of Chriſt; and inſtead of the great Things of Jeſus, endeavour to perſwade Men that ſuch Things are neceſſary to be known or believed, or done, which can't be made evident to Men's Conſciences out of the Goſpel, and according to the ordinary Way of God's manifeſting his Truth to his People by, and in his Word they do no Ways ſerve the Kingdom of Chriſt, but hinder it. This is the Way to take Men's Minds off from an Attention to the Truths of the Goſpel, and the Evidence of them, to Matters of doubtful Diſputation, which the Apoſtle warns againſt, *Rom.* 14. 1, and to ſet them either to contend with one another, or to perſwade them to believe Things to belong to the Truth of Chriſt, which are not evident to their Conſciences, and ſo can't govern their Souls by the Authority of Chriſt. Either of which leads Men's Minds from Chriſt, and an Obedience to, and Practice of his Will; to ſet up Men for their Maſters. This is contrary to the Faith of the Goſpel; and as ſuch *Timothy* is warn'd againſt it, 1 Tim. 1. 4, 5. *Neither give Heed to Fables, and endleſs Genealogies, which miniſter Queſtions rather than godly Edifying, which is in Faith. Now the End of the Commandment is Charity, out of a pure Heart, and of a good Conſcience, and of Faith unfeigned.*

2. *Such*

3. *Such as make a perſonal Application of Truths to particular Perſons in a peremptory unconditional Manner.*

The Truths of Chriſt are to be manifeſted to the Conſciences of Men, and ſo they will overcome the Soul, and bow it to the Obedience of the Goſpel. But the particular Application of theſe Truths is made by Chriſt himſelf through his Holy Spirit, giving Evidence of them to the Conſcience, and their particular Relation to this or that Man. But when Men pretend to make that, they do very often greatly diſſerve the Kingdom of Chriſt, while perhaps they think they are zealouſly ſerving it. As for Inſtance, it is a plain and certain Truth that he that is impenitent and an Unbeliever ſhall be damned. And without a Man is regenerated, and born again he ſhall not enter into the Kingdom of God. Now for me to make a perſonal unconditional Application of this Truth, and to ſay to this or that Man, you are an unconverted, unregenerate Sinner, and will be damned, has no Tendency to ſerve the Kingdom of Chriſt; but greatly tends to diſſerve it. For it is in the Nature of the Thing impoſſible that it ſhould carry Conviction along with it, and has an apparent Tendency to irritate, exaſperate and prejudice Men, even if it be materially true. For every Man of ordinary Capacity in the World who has read the Goſpel, may certainly know that I have no other Way to know this concerning any particular Man, but by knowing the evident and certain Marks of Impenitency and Unbelief in him. Now, tho' I may certainly know from the Word of God what are the Marks of Impenitency and Unbelief, yet I can only probably know them in this or that particular Man; and therefore can only conditionally apply them to him, and muſt leave it to God, and his own Conſcience to determine whether they belong to him, or not; and this the Man knows can as well be determined by declaring thoſe Truths, and the Marks of that State, as by any perſonal and peremptory Determination of mine concerning him; and the Application is properly and alone the Work of Conſcience, in the Hand of Chriſt, and his Holy Spirit; when therefore I do that, I do what I cannot evidence to any Man's Conſcience

Conſcience to be a Truth, or that I know it to be ſo, and therefore I not only prejudice his Mind againſt me, but againſt the Truth itſelf, i. e. againſt the Conviction of Truth, thereby hindering his Converſion and Salvation, inſtead of promoting it: There is no Way that it tends to convince him that that is true which I ſay, unleſs I can perſwade him that I am immediately informed by the Spirit of God that it is ſo; and this is to perſwade him to believe a Lie, and to draw away his Mind from the Authority of the Word of Chriſt, to my ſelf, and Chriſt's pretended Authority in me, which is not given me by Chriſt; but to ſay the beſt of it, ignorantly, boldly and inſolently uſurped. But then if what I ſay to the Man in this perſonal Application be not ſo much as materially true, as it is poſſible it may not; and for ought I can certainly know, the Man may be regenerate, and born again; then I am guilty of uttering a Falſhood and a Lie in the Name of Chriſt, as well as of invading the Office of Chriſt, and of the Holy Ghoſt, and of Conſcience: And *we know that no Lie is of the Truth*, 1 John 2. 21. Nor can the Glory of God, and the Kingdom of Chriſt be ſerved, but is diſſerved by it, and the Comfort and Uſefulneſs of his Servants hindred; my Fellow-Servant is beaten, and a Bar laid in the Way of another's promoting the Kingdom of Chriſt. So when in our perſonal Applications of Truth we act in a peremptory unconditional Manner, we do no Ways advance the Kingdom of Chriſt, but hinder it, and take off Men from placing an entire Faith in Chriſt, and yielding an unreſerved Obedience to him; to a Faith in, and Obedience to us.

But the III. USE is to ſhow us, *That 'tis impoſſible the Souls and Conſciences of Men ſhould have any other rightful Lord but Chriſt.*

The Kingdom of Chriſt is a Kingdom which God ſent Him into the World to ſet up, and this is built on the Truth which he came to bear Witneſs to, and is promoted only by the Evidence of the Truth to the Conſcience. Chriſt is the King of Truth, and his Kingdom is a Kingdom of Truth: Therefore Chriſt as King in his Kingdom, has the

ſole Right of giving Law to the Conſciences of Men, the ſole Right of guiding, and directing them. And Men's Conſciences may never be ſubmitted to any other Lord. Mat. 23. 8, 9, 10. *Be ye not called Rabbi, for one is your Maſter, even Chriſt. And call no Man Father upon Earth, for one is your Father which is in Heaven. Neither be ye called Maſters, for one is your Maſter, even Chriſt.* Whoever pretends to ſet up or acknowledge any other, ſets up another King and Lord of Truth; makes another King in Chriſt's Kingdom; by all which he denies the great fundamental, unchangeable Truth, that Chriſt is the King of Truth; he denies that Chriſt came into the World to bear Witneſs to the Truth, becauſe he denies the great Truth that he came to bear Witneſs to, upon which the Certainty and Evidence of all other Truths he came to bear Witneſs to, depend. If there be any other Lord of Conſcience but Chriſt, then he is no King; he has no Kingdom among Men, he did not then bear Witneſs to the Truth, but to a Falſhood. And if it were ſo, the Evidence of Truth to the Conſciences of Men, would dethrone Chriſt, and ſet up another King in his Stead.

USE IV. *Hence we may infer, that after all the Pains and Endeavours of all the Men in the World, they can't poſſibly make any Man a true Chriſtian.*

No Man can be ſo who is not made ſo by the Evidence and Light of divine Truth ſhining in his Mind, convincing his Conſcience, and bowing his Will freely, and heartily to embrace Chriſt, and the Obedience of the Goſpel. And to effect this is beyond the Power of Man. Man may declare that Truth which Chriſt came to bear Witneſs to, but he can't make any other Man apprehend the divine Excellency, and Certainty of that Truth: This is the alone Work of Chriſt, and the Holy Spirit. The Mind of Man is by Sin darkned and prejudiced againſt thoſe Truths of the Goſpel; Man has wronged God and has a Conſciouſneſs that God is angry with him, and is able to puniſh him for it, and he is afraid he will, and therefore he hates him. And beſide, he has ſince the Fall, a natural

Unlikeneſs

Unlikeneſs to God, and hates the Holineſs and Purity of the divine Nature, and that Purity which the Truth of Chriſt requires; and hence he will either fly from God, and be prejudiced againſt the Offer of Reconciliation to him, through Fears and Jealouſies of his Heart, that God is not ſincere and in earneſt, and that he will not be reconciled to him on the Terms of the Goſpel; or he will imagine that if he grows better, and amends thoſe Things for which God is diſpleaſed, that he will therefore be the more inclined to pity and pardon him: Both which are contrary to the Truth of the Goſpel: Or elſe the Man under the ſtupid Blindneſs and Inſenſibility of his Heart, can't ſee any great Evil in Sin, and therefore not that Need of ſuch a Way of Reconciliation as the Goſpel provides, and ſo will not be afraid of the divine Anger and Puniſhment due for Sin: He will not believe there is ſuch an abſolute Neceſſity of Chriſt, and the Virtue of his Blood; or the Neceſſity of a thorough Change of his Heart and Life. And it is not in the Power of Man to remove the Blindneſs, the Prejudices, and Jealouſies of the Minds of Men. Man can declare the Truth, but there is a Neceſſity for the Spirit of God to open his Eyes, and make him ſee that it is the Truth, the Truth of God teſtified by Chriſt; That thoſe Things are real and certain Things; then he will be overcome, and bow'd to Chriſt, he will be brought into Subjection to his Obedience. Men can only miniſterially promote the Kingdom of Chriſt, and propound Truth: But to enlighten the Mind, and ſtrengthen and diſpoſe it to receive, and own the Truth; to remove the Prejudices, and Jealouſies of the Heart concerning God, to make the Soul attend to the Truth, and the Force, and Beauty and Power of it ſhine into his Heart; and to make him feal the Influence of it on his Conſcience, this is the Work of the Spirit of God. *The God of this World blinds the Minds of Men, leſt the Light of the glorious Goſpel of Chriſt, who is the Image of God, ſhould ſhine into them.* But it is the God and King of Truth who ſhineth into their Hearts, to free them from the blinding Power of their Luſts, and Pride and Enmity, to give the

Light of the Knowledge of the Truth unto them, 1 *Cor.* 4. 4, 5.

USE V. *This Doctrine gives you a Rule by which to judge of your Chriſtianity, or being the Members of Chriſt's Kingdom.* The Kingdom of Chriſt is promoted by the Truth, or Men are brought into it by ſeeing the Force and Evidence of the great divine Truths which the Goſpel reveals, or Chriſt came to bear Witneſs to. Now hence you may learn whether you are the Subjects of Chriſt or no. If you are Chriſtians becauſe it is the Cuſtom of the Country to be ſo, or becauſe you have been induced to your Profeſſion by any worldly Motives or Perſwaſions; if you profeſs Faith in Chriſt, and Obedience to him, becauſe you are afraid of doing otherwiſe; becauſe you ſhall looſe or miſs of ſome worldly Good and Advantage, or be in Danger of ſome temporal Evils or Diſadvantage, if you did not ſo; yea if you perſwade yourſelves you are Chriſtians becauſe your Imaginations have been greatly terrified with Fears of Hell, and you were afraid you ſhould go there if you be not; or only becauſe you hope by being Chriſtians to eſcape it; if theſe Things, or a miſtaken Notion about Chriſt, and the Nature of the Goſpel Obedience, have perſwaded you to become Chriſtians; or if when you gave up yourſelves (as you ſuppoſed) to Chriſt, you did not know what you did, but acted in the Tumult of your Paſſions, and from the Heat of Imagination, you need not be at a Loſs about your State, and if you fancy you are the Subjects of Chriſt you are deceived; you are the Children of Darkneſs, and not of Light; you are ſtill Subjects of the Devil, and not of Chriſt. But if the Force and Evidence of Truth, has ſhined into your Minds; if you have from the divine Truth of what Chriſt has teſtified from God, ſeen the true Nature, and real Hatefulneſs of Sin, ſeen your own Sinfulneſs, Pollution, and hateful Unlikeneſs to God; if you have had a feeling, real, and powerful Conviction of the Truth of the divine Perfections, of the glorious Offices of Chriſt, and of his Power, and Willingneſs to ſave you, and of the Excellency of Holineſs; and have thereby been

made

made willing to accept of Chriſt, and choſen him for your Saviour, if you have choſen his Terms of Salvation, and the Way of Holineſs, and love them for Chriſt's Sake, for their own, for the Sake of the Truth, Fitneſs and Goodneſs of them: if you chuſe to pleaſe and obey Chriſt and the Truth from the Knowledge and Love of it overpouring your Hearts, then you belong to Chriſt, you are his Subjects, and have been tranſlated out of the Kingdom of Darkneſs into the marvellous Light of Chriſt and of Truth.

USE VI. *This Doctrine may be improved to quicken and direct our Endeavours to promote the Kingdom of Chriſt.*---

We ought all to be concerned to do all that is poſſible for us to promote this Kingdom and ſerve the Intereſts of it. It is the moſt juſt and righteous, the greateſt, beſt, and moſt glorious Kingdom in the World; a Kingdom which is above all Things in the World deareſt to God. This has coſt the Son of God all the Sorrows and Sufferings of his Life, his Blood, and Death. It is a Kingdom founded in Truth, built up and eſtabliſhed by it: and which only recovers Men to Truth, to God and to themſelves. The Nature of this Kingdom ſhows us it is of infinite Importance to endeavour all we poſſibly can to promote and advance it. The Nature of it alſo ſhows us how, and by what Means we are to endeavour the Intereſts of it in every Condition of Life; in whatever State we are in, we are to act, and ſpeak, and live the Truth as it is in Jeſus; whether Men will hear, or forbear, we are to bear Witneſs to the Truth. The Apoſtle ſays, 2 *Cor.* 13. 8. *We can do nothing againſt the Truth, but for the Truth.* If we belong to Chriſt we can willingly do no other, and if we would promote his Kingdom there is no other way. If we declare, or if we live and practiſe Errors and Falſhoods, we are promoting the Kingdom of the Devil which is founded in Lies, and Darkneſs, and ſupported by the ſame Means. If we hide the Truth from Men, or endeavour to deceive them; if we hinder them from ſeeing the Truth, or put and keep them under Diſadvantages to know it, juſt ſo far we are ſerving the Kingdom of Satan and oppoſing the Kingdom of

of Christ. The Ministers of the Gospel can no other Way advance the Kingdom of Christ than in living and preaching Truth, setting before Men in the clearest Manner possible the great Truths of Jesus Christ. When they preach Errors, when they preach Uncertainties, when they preach themselves, and their own Fancies, they are serving the Kingdom of Satan, and not of Christ; and so they are when they take Men's Minds off from the great, important, necessary, and eternal Truths of Religion, and instead thereof tell them that which Christ in his Word has not told them, when they take any Method but as far as possible to have the Truth manifested to every Man's *Conscience in the Sight of God.*---So Magistrates, Rulers, and private Men in their Places, are to live, and speak, and act the Truth, and to do all they can that every Man may enjoy with the entire Freedom of his Mind and Conscience, the best Advantages he can have to know the Truths of Jesus Christ, and be under the most happy Circumstances to judge of it without prejudice or Partiality, and be overcome by the Force and Evidence of Truth; nothing else can ever captivate him to the Obedience of Christ. The Kingdom of Christ is founded in Truth, 'tis upheld by it: and it is the Love, and Practise of Truth which is the Life and Soul of it. That Man who will not be conquered by the meer Force and Evidence of divine Truth, will never be a Subject of Jesus Christ, he is in Darkness, and notwithstanding every other Method, he will abide in Darkness, and make his Bed in eternal Darkness.

* * * \

SERMON VI.

All regenerate and renewed Souls are the Subjects of Christ.

V. OBSERVATION.

EVery One who is of the Truth, or every renewed and enlightned Soul, is a Subject of Christ, and will hear his Voice.

In discoursing on this Observation, I shall consider

1. *What it is to be of the Truth.*
2. *Every One who is so, is renewed and enlightned.*
3. *He is a Subject of Christ.*
4. *Every such Soul will hear the Voice of Christ.*

Consider 1. *What it is to be of the Truth.*

The Phrase in general imports a Person's belonging to the Truth, being derived from it, begotten, or born of it; as to be of such a Family is to be derived or descended from it, or to belong to it; to be of a Country, or of a Kingdom, is to belong to that Land; to be one of that Society or Corporation, to be of such a Church is to belong to it, or to be one of its Members; so to *be of the Truth* is to belong to that; to derive one's Character, and Name from a Relation to it. Now as the Truth Christ speaks of, you have heard before, is the Truth of God; those divine eternal Truths concerning the Being, Subsistence, Perfections, and Will of God; his Goverment and Providence,

Providence, which Chriſt came to reveal and teſtify: and the State of Man by Nature, his fallen, ſinful loſt Condition; and the glorious Way of Recovery to the Favour and Love of God, and everlaſting Communion with, and Bleſſedneſs in him. To be of the Truth therefore, in the Senſe of the Text, is to be really, and truly religious, or to have a right and real Senſe of true Religion; of its infinite Worth and Excellency, a Pleaſure and Satisfaction in it, and in feeling its divine Power and Influence in the Soul. To be of the Truth, means therefore

1. *To be an hearty and unfeigned Lover of it.*

A Man who loves Religion with all his Soul, delights in the Knowledge that makes him wiſe, and holy, and good, and like the Object of all true Religion, i. e. the true God, that Man is of the Truth.

God is the only Object in whom all Religion terminates, and centers. Hence all the Worſhip, and religious Service (as it has been called) which has ever been paid, or performed by Men, has been offered to ſomething under the Notion of God; but as there is but one true God, ſo there can be but one true, and right Object of all religious Worſhip, about, or concerning whom, all true Religion is converſant: And to love Religion or the Truth of that, or Truth as it relates to it, is to love the Truth of God; this is to be ſincerely and heartily diſpoſed to receive and embrace all that Truth concerning him, or relating to his Being, Perfections, Providence, or Government; the Way of our Communion with him, and Happineſs in him, which only makes us wiſe, and good, and truly happy. To be of the Truth is heartily and unfeignedly to love theſe Truths: There have been many Pretenders to the Love of Truth, and Wiſdom in the Heathen World; who have therefore given themſelves the Name of *Philoſophers*, but moſt of them have rather deſerved the Name of *Moroſophers*, or Lovers of Folly; for while they have pretended to love Truth they have not been willing to receive the Truth in the Love of it. They have made their own Underſtandings the Meaſure and Standard of Truth, rather than ſubmitted their Underſtandings to the Influence and Force

Force of Truth : Their Pride and Luſts blinded their Minds. Hence is that Character the Apoſtle gives of them Rom. 1. 18. *Who hold the Truth of God in Unrighteouſneſs.* And v. 22. *Profeſſing themſelves to be wiſe, they became Fools.* And v. 25. *They changed the Truth of God into a Lie.* Many Men love ſome Truths, as of natural Philoſophy, and of the Works of Nature, but while their Love of it is meerly in the Things themſelves, and terminated on them, they are not properly Lovers of Truth, for all Truth leads to God, and terminates in him, as the Original and Fountain of it. If Men fall ſhort of that Fountain of Truth, they are not impartial Lovers of it; but rather Lovers of their own Wit, and Wiſdom, or indulgent of their natural Pride and Self-Conceit. To be an impartial Lover of Truth is to be a Lover of Religion, and of the true Perfection and Happineſs of our own Natures, and of God the ſupream Object of Good and Truth, in whom it all centers and terminates.

2. *To be of the Truth, is to be impartially addicted, devoted and given up to the Truth.*

He that is of the Family of Truth, and belongs to it, is one who is impartially and ſincerely devoted to it, to ſearch for it, to purſue after it, as his Treaſure, his Good, his Happineſs; and counts the finding Truth is the finding the greateſt Riches : not he that would fain have that to be Truth which may beſt ſuit his natural and corrupt Deſires; but he would have, and poſſeſs the Truth as his chief Good, be it where it will, and howſoever it croſs his own Inclinations and Affections, let it coſt what Pains or Self-denial it will: He who gives up himſelf to the Truth, and devotes his Soul to the Search, and obtaining of it, and his Life to its Influence, Obedience, and Service, and counts that in poſſeſſing it he poſſeſſes all. According to that Direction of the wiſe Man, *Prov.* 23. 23. *Buy the Truth and ſell it not.* "We muſt be willing to part with any "Thing for it. He doth not ſay at what Rate we muſt "buy it, for we can't buy it too dear, but muſt have it at "any Rate whatever. We muſt ſuffer any Loſs rather "than neglect it : 'Tis a Pearl of ſuch Price, that we "muſt be willing to part with all to purchaſe it, make

" Shipwreck of Eſtate, Trade, Preferment, and any Thing " rather than this. And we muſt never ſell it or part with " it for Pleaſure, Honours, or getting, or ſaving any ſe- " cular Intereſt whatſoever." Hence the Apoſtle ſays, *We cannot do any Thing againſt the Truth, but for the Truth.* They had no Power as Apoſtles and Miniſters of Chriſt to do any Thing againſt the Truth, but all their Power and Authority was for the Truth. Nor could they, as belonging to the Truth, act againſt it, but were under an happy Neceſſity to act for it, to purſue after, and live in it.

2. *Every one who is of the Truth, is renewed, and enlightned.*

To be of the Truth, is to be taught of God, to be renewed in the Spirit of the Mind, and to be delivered from the native Ignorance, and Blindneſs which is the Miſery and Ruin of Man. To ſhew theſe to be ſynonimous, or that every one who is of the Truth is a renewed, enlightned Soul, and every renewed enlightned Soul is of the Truth, we may conſider a few Things.

1. *Man ſince the Fall is naturally ignorant of divine Truth, and an Enemy to it.*

In Man's original and innocent State his Eyes were open to ſee the Truth, and it was the Object of his Complacency and Delight; he found Happineſs in the Poſſeſſion of it, and Union to it. But when he let Sin into his Soul, the Knowledge and Love of Truth went out: He became ignorant of God; and his Mind was blinded. It is plain that he had immediately falſe Conceptions of the Goodneſs and Simplicity of the divine Nature, and wrong Tho'ts of his own State, his Relation to God, his Dependance on him, and his Diſtance from him. Inſtead of the native Simplicity of Truth which fill'd his Soul before, a crafty Subtlety, and envious Pride, and Perverſeneſs now poſſeſſed his Mind: All which is eaſy to diſcern by reading the Account of his Temptation, his Fall, and what paſſed between God and him immediately after it. And this is the State of all his Poſterity ſince: They are born in his Image, ignorant of divine Truth, and Haters of it. There remains ſtill in Man a partial Love of Truth, i. e. a Love of

of ſomething true, mix'd with a great Degree of Falſhood and Error, which confounds the Truth, and perverts the Mind from its real and genuine Influence; and this is according to the Ignorance of the Mind concerning it, and the Darkneſs of the Underſtanding under the Glimmerings and Beams of Truth, which ſometimes break a little thro' the thick Clouds of his Ignorance and Prejudice, and flaſh upon his Mind. Hence the Apoſtle attributes all the Wickedneſs, the monſtrous Idolatry, Impurity, and Unrighteouſneſs of the Gentile World to this Cauſe, their Ignorance of the Truth: Eph. 4. 18. *Having the Underſtanding darkened, being alienated from the Life of God, through the Ignorance that is in them, becauſe of the Blindneſs of their Heart.* And even the Knowledge they had of God was a Sort of not knowing him, though it left them inexcuſable: Becauſe they were not from thence excited to ſearch after the Knowledge of the Simplicity of his Nature and Perfections, yet it was but ſuch a Glimmering as to be overpowered by the Darkneſs of their Minds, Rom. 1. 21. *Becauſe when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their Imaginations, and their fooliſh Heart was darkned.* Though this was increaſed, and they were at Length judicially given up by God through their Negligence, and willing Perverſeneſs: Yet this willing Perverſeneſs was the Fruit of their Ignorance, and for Want of the Light of Truth ſtrongly ſhining upon their Underſtanding. And therefore this is the Repreſentation of the State of Mankind in a natural, fallen, corrupt Condition.

2. *Men are naturally full of Prejudices againſt the Truth.*

That this is the common State of Man is abundantly evident, in that it is ſo hard to root out Prejudices from the Minds of all Men, and make them willing to ſee and embrace the Truth, or impartially to conſider and attend to it. Theſe Prejudices ariſe partly from Men's Luſts; partly from their ſervile Dread of God, and Fear of his Wrath; and from a vicious, irregular Self-love, and Pride.

1. *From Men's Luſts.*

Men's particular Luſts and corrupt Inclinations ſtrongly prejudice their Minds againſt thoſe Truths which croſs

and contradict them. Hence Men hate to see that Truth which will oblige them to deny those Lusts, to endeavour to mortify and subdue them. They are more willing to see any Truth than that which is contrary to their prevailing Inclinations and Desires. We find it so in all Men. The covetous Man can't see those Truths which oblige him to be charitable, generous, and beneficent. The luxurious Person can't see the Truths which offer to force upon him Temperance, the Regulation and Goverment of all his Appetites, and Desires, and a Life of Abstinence, Sobriety and Virtue. An ambitious Man can't see the Truth which thwarts his honorary Views and Desires of worldly Applause, Power and Esteem. You may try Men with such Truths as cross these Lusts and Desires, when they come to be particularly applied to open, and convince of their Case, and they can't see them; tho' they own the Principles, and general Truths, yet as they relate to them, and so are particular Truths to their Case, they can't see them, and will find out an hundred Ways to Evidence that these Things are not true. Whereas at the same time they will readily own some other Truths of Nature and Morality, yea, and great Truths of Religion which seem to have no direct ungrateful Aspect upon them; they will own that they appear evident and certain to them, because there is nothing in the Way to hinder them and prejudice their Minds against them. Though the Truth of the Matter is, they feel the Force of Truth little more in these Things than in the other, it no more captivates, and subdues them than in those Things wherein they will not own the Truth. But in these there being no special Interest in them against it, they don't care if it be true, for they don't see they are in Danger of loosing any Thing by it; there is nothing very dear to them cross'd or contradicted; and perhaps, they hope it will be a Benefit to them, but they gain no real Advantage by it, for they feel no Sweetness and Excellency in it, nor are their Hearts drawn to God and swallowed up in him as the Original of all Truth and Good. But in the other Case, they are strongly prepossess'd and prejudiced, and so they can't see the

the Truth, but hate it. This our Saviour plainly repreſents as the State of the Jews in his Time. Nothing could make them ſee the divine Truth which he reveal'd, becauſe it contradicted their ſettled Notions about the Meſſiah's Kingdom; and the covetous, ambitious, and worldly Views they had, and would have forced them to deny and act contrary to them. The ſame he tells us in general Terms is the Caſe of every natural Man, John 3. 19, 20 *And this is the Condemnation, that Light is come into the World, and Men loved Darkneſs rather than Light, becauſe their Deeds were evil. For every one that doth Evil, hateth the Light, neither cometh to the Light, leſt his Deeds ſhould be reproved.*

2. *Theſe Prejudices ariſe partly from Men's ſervile Dread of God, and Fears of his Wrath.*

Man is now become a Sinner and an Heir of Wrath, he has a natural Conſciouſneſs of his Guilt; He feels and knows he is not what he ſhould be; and his Conſcience tells him he deſerves the Wrath of God, and that God is able to puniſh him and make him miſerable as he deſerves. Hence he is in Dread of God, and flies from Him; he durſt not ſee him, nor ſee himſelf. Hence we find our firſt Parents contrived firſt to hide themſelves from their own Sight, and made themſelves Aprons of Fig-leaves, and then when that would not do, they endeavour'd to hide themſelves from God. They run away and hid *themſelves among the Trees of the Garden*, Gen. 3. 7, 8. This is a true Emblem of the State of their Poſterity ever ſince. Men have wronged and injured God by Sin, and they have a Conſciouſneſs that he has Power to puniſh them, therefore they dread him, and thence they hate him. They don't love to ſee the Truth of his Juſtice, his infinite Power, Wiſdom and Holineſs. They hate to ſee themſelves to be what they really are, and to ſee Sin as it is: but would diſguiſe it with falſe Colours, and throw off the Blame of it upon others, yea, upon God himſelf; upon his Decrees, his Providence, and the Nature and Neceſſity of that Condition he made them in, as *Adam* and *Eve* did. *The Serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. The Woman which thou gaveſt to be with me, ſhe gave me of the Tree, and I did eat.* Gen. 3. 12, 13.

Men

Men hate to see the Truth because they look upon it their Enemy, and arm'd against them. They hate God should reign, and are unwilling to see him to be what he is, least their Condition should appear too ugly, uneasy and disagreeable to themselves, and so their Minds are filled with Prejudices against it.

3. *They arise from a vicious irregular Self-love, and Pride in their Hearts.*

God, the Author of our Nature, did at first implant in the Heart of Man a Principle of Self-love which can never be rooted out; an insatiable and unquenchable Desire of his own Happiness. And this Principle in his original State naturally led him to God as the supream Object of his Happiness, and the infinite, eternal Source of all Good. And while he saw God the Fountain of Truth and Good, he must needs feel his own Felicity in viewing his infinite Perfections, and in the Union of his Soul to him, and must supreamly love him, and that infinite and unchangeable Truth which is essential to him, and is God, and must feel the most extatick Pleasure and Happiness in that Love, and the Rest and Complacency of his Soul in the delightful Object of it. But when he became a Rebel against God he lost the Love of God, and set up himself in the Room of God; he loved himself more than God, and instead of him. So far as he simply loves Happiness, he acts according to the Principle which God implanted in his Nature. Yet this Principle now corrupted and depraved, does not as 'tis now in him, lead him to God, but drive him away from him. For now he does not see that his Happiness now lies in the Vision of God, in the full Conformity of himself to the divine Image, and in his entire Rest and Complacency in God; but thinks it to be in the Comformity of God to his State, Temper and Inclinations. Instead of being made like God, he would have God made like him. He would have such a God as will make him happy as he is. Instead of beholding and admiring the infinite Perfections of God as they are in him, he measures and judges of them by his own supposed Excellencies, and thinks that would be good in God which he takes to be good and desirable in

in himself; fancies that God will be pleased with what he is pleased with, and like him for what he likes himself. He can't be content that God should be, or govern otherwise than he would have him. To this the Impiety, Lusts and sinful Courses of wicked Men, and their Hopes of Impunity are ascribed, Psal. 50. 21. *Thou thoughtest I was altogether such an one as thyself.* Man's sensual Appetites, and carnal Affections have gain'd the Ascendant over his Mind, and perverted his Will; they blind his Mind, he misjudges of Happiness, and yet is fond of his own Judgment from the false Estimate he has of himself; he hates God should be what he himself is not, (except it be to be able and willing to make him happy in his own Way, and not in God's.) He hates to be controul'd, and in all Things subjected to God, and have no Happiness but in his Will; and find no Excellency, or Perfection but in him. *Vain Man would be wise, though Man be born like the wild Asses Colt,* Job 11. 12. There is nothing like Pride to blind the Eyes of Man, and hide Truth from him: Nothing that makes it so impossible for him to see the Truth. When a Man's Eyes are full of himself, and dazzled with the false Flashes of his own Excellencies, he can't see the Truth of God, he really owns no other God but himself. That is Truth in his Eye which is measured by his Standard, Prov. 16. 2. *All the Ways of a Man are clean in his own Eyes.* When Truth shines, it dazzles him, and as it were puts out his Eyes, because it is not such as he thinks it should be. Hence 'tis that a Blackmore fancies his God is of his own Colour. Every natural Man thinks those are the best Things of God which he supposes most agreeable to his own Complexion. These are the principal Reasons or Causes of those Prejudices which are in the Minds of Men against the Truth, which shew us that Men are not naturally of the Truth, but they must be renewed and enlightned to be of it.

3. *In the enlightning and renewing the Soul, the Spirit of God testifies to the Certainty of those Truths which Christ has revealed.*

The Work of enlightning, renewing and regenerating Men, is in the holy Scripture fully and plainly attributed to the Spirit

Spirit of God. And that Regeneration changes the Soul from the Fashion of this World to the Image and Life of God thro' the Knowledge of the Truth. *Rom.* 12. 2, the Apostle says, *We are saved by the Washing of Regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.* And this Regeneration is by the Knowledge of God and his Truth, which is given by the Illumination of the Holy Ghost, *Col.* 3. 10. *And have put on the new Man, which is renewed in Knowledge after the Image of him that created him.* Now this Illumination is a testifying to the Soul, the Divinity and Certainty of the Truths of the Gospel which Christ has revealed, or that Knowledge concerning God which is therein made known, which seems described, 1 *Joh.* 2. 27. *But the anointing which ye have received of him, abideth in you. And ye need not that any Man teach you, but as the same anointing teacheth you of all Things, and is Truth, and is no Lie: and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.* The Nature of this Illumination, and that Kind of it which renews and regenerates the Soul, is decyphered and ascribed to the Holy Ghost, and His Witness to the Truth. 1. *Joh.* 5. 6. *It is the Spirit that beareth Witness, because the Spirit is Truth.* He gives a satisfying Conviction and Testimony to the Truth which Christ has revealed; clears the Understanding of its Darkness and Blindness about them. Both the Author and Instrument of this is declared, *James* 1. 18. *Of his own Will begat he us with the Word of Truth.* Now when this Truth appears to be certain, and of God, the Soul receives it, and gives up itself to its Light, and Power and Goodness.

4. *The Spirit of God in enlightning and renewing the Soul, witnesses, or discovers the Excellency and infinite Beauty and Goodness of those Truths.*

The Light which is given to the Mind in its Renovation by the Spirit is not only of the Certainty of those Things which the Gospel reveals, or a Testimony that they are really and certainly true, and of God, but also that they are most excellent, beautiful, amiable, and worthy of all Acceptation: That what Christ has reveal'd concerning God, is the greatest, best, and sweetest Truth; as there is no Danger in relying upon it, so there is nothing greater, better,

ter, or more excellent to be known of God, or concerning him: that as God is there reveal'd he is worthy to be loved, truſted, and depended on forever. That he is an Object infinitely amiable, and muſt deſerve our ſupream Love, Delight and Complacency. Thoſe Revelations of the glorious inconceivable Manner of the divine Subſiſtence are ſuch as is worthy of God, and infinitely exalt him in the Admiration and Eſteem of the Mind. The Diſcoveries of his Perfections, his Wiſdom, Juſtice, Holineſs, his unchangeable Hatred of Sin and infinite Contrariety to it, are worthy of God, and give a glorious Foundation of an holy Soul's Complacency and perfect Reſt in him. The Knowledge of his boundleſs Mercy, and Reconcilableneſs to Sinners, and the Wonders of his Grace and Wiſdom in the Way of Salvation by his Son Jeſus Chriſt, is ſuch a Way as is becoming a God; perfectly honourable to his Juſtice and his Law, and perfectly ſecures the Happineſs of every Soul who takes God at his Word, and comes to Him on the Condition of the Goſpel. That the Purity, and Holineſs of the Soul, and Reſtoration to the Image of God by Chriſt, is not only becoming God, but is the true and proper Way of the Soul's Perfection and Happineſs: and that its Union to God, and Communion with him, is all the Reſt and Joy and Delight that it can ever properly have, and therefore 'tis nothing but the Compleatneſs of this that makes its Heaven and Bleſſedneſs. When it is as far as it can be what God is, and has as much of God in it ſelf as it can have, it has all of Heaven, Happineſs and Perfection which it can have. Therefore when the *Soul beholds as in a Glaſs*, that is, by the Inſtrumentality of the Goſpel, the *Glory of the Lord, 'tis changed into the ſame Image, and from Glory to Glory*, 2 Cor. 3. 15; from one Degree of glorious Grace to another, or the Glory of God (is as it were) transfer'd into the Soul, and it ſhines in a Likeneſs to it, by a Participation of it, and finding it in it ſelf. Now when this Beauty, and Excellency of the Truth, as revealed by Chriſt, appears to the Mind, its Prejudices flee away and vaniſh, and the Soul ſtands amazed at its own former Blindneſs and Folly in thoſe Prejudices againſt the Truth, and its own

Perfection; it is satisfied of the Excellencies of God, and the Safety and Fitness of its resting on him, and Happiness of its Union to him. The Truths of God appears all admirable, harmonious, agreeable to such a divine Being, and in all Respects suited to the Happiness of Man, which is described by the Apostle, 1 Cor. 2. 7, 8, 9, 10. *But we speak the Wisdom of God in a Mystery, even the hidden Wisdom which God ordain'd before the World unto our Glory, which none of the Princes of this World knew; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither have entred into the Heart of Man, the Things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit.*

5. *Hereupon the Soul receives, embraces, and acts towards this Truth according to the Discovery of it.*

When Truth shines into the Understanding, that Light dispels the Ignorance it was under before, for this is the Privation of Ignorance, as Light is of Darkness. *That which makes manifest is Light*, Eph. 5. 13. This overpowers and overcomes that Darkness which kept out the Light of Truth before; so the Understanding and Judgment assents and gives up it self unto it, as Truth, and yields to the Evidence, Force and Simplicity of it. And when it appears as Good, Beautiful and Excellent, as well as certain, the Will is bow'd, the Affections are overcome, and drawn to it, to embrace it with greatest Sweetness and Satisfaction, to be united with it. This overcomes the Prejudices that arose in the Mind from the Power of its Lusts, and its false Apprehensions of Good and Happiness; & those which arose from its slavish Dread of God, and Fears of his Wrath, and the Punishment due for Sin, by discovering the Safety and Happiness of coming to God, and resting on his Grace and Promises in Christ; and an infinite Desireableness in being made like God, and partaking of his Nature and Image. The Soul is delivered from its own Pride by seeing the superlative Excellency of God and divine Truth, it thence understands its own Emptiness and Nothingness, and Unlikeness to infinite Beauty and Goodness, and

and at the same Time understands that God the Fountain of Truth, the Origin of all Good, is the only proper Object of its Felicity, and that by an Union to Him, it feels unspeakable Delight and Satisfaction; and this great God is willing to communicate himself and all this Good unto it, whereon the Soul acts towards God in Faith, Love, Repentance, and Subjection of it self to him, in proportion to the Views it has of the Certainty and Excellency of this Truth. It chuses all its Perfection and Happiness in God and his Promise and Covenant in Christ, and is satisfied well enough there. So it will say as *David* in Prospect of this Salvation, 2 *Sam.* 23. 5. *Although my House be not so with with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting Covenant ordered in all Things and sure: For this is all my Salvation, and all my Desire, although he make it not to grow.*

3. Part. *Every One who is of the Truth, or every renewed and enlightned Soul, is a Subject of Christ.*

Our Lord tells *Pilate* he is a King, he was born for this End, and for this Cause he came into the World, that he might bear Witness to the Truth. He came to reveal and bear Witness of the Truth, and nothing but the Truth concerning God, Himself, and the Way in which Sinners may be restored to his Favour, and made for ever happy through Him. And this is the Means and Instrument of all his Conquest and Government. Every one who is acquainted with, and begotten by the Truth, becomes a willing and loyal Subject of Christ; while they who love Falsehood, reject him. Christ's Kingdom is not of this World, but his Subjects are all such as are of the Truth.

Now this appears

1. *Because divine Truth is only revealed by, and through Christ, or in him.*

Indeed the Being, and eternal Perfections of God are discovered in his Works both of Creation and Providence; that which by natural Light may be known of God is manifested in the Creatures, and thereby *the invisible Things of God, even his eternal Power and Godhead are made known,* Rom. 1. 20. But then these reveal nothing concerning the State

of Sin and Misery which Man finds himself now in. There is no Notice given how he came into it, or how he shall get out of it. But in the Revelation which God has given by Christ, we are told of the Sin and Ruin of our first Parents; of the lost and undone State of Mankind. We have clear Notices given us how sad, and deplorable is the Condition of Man by Sin, and God's inexorable Hatred of it, and also of his Reconcilableness to Sinners through the Satisfaction of his own Son Jesus Christ; and his perfect Sufficiency to restore us to Holiness, and the Image of God, and make us everlastingly happy in him. 'Tis by Christ we learn the glorious Way of Salvation through the Covenant of Grace established in his Blood, and confirmed by it. Thro' Christ we learn the Excellency of Holiness, and the Grace and Wisdom of the Way which God has provided for our Happiness by the Renovation of our Souls, and the Sanctification of our Natures, and how our Happiness lies in embracing, loving, and being subjected to the Force and Power of Truth. All therefore that are of the Truth, all that truly love Religion, and the Truth, are Christians, and own Christ as their King and Lord; and the King of Truth. For greater, better, surer, sweeter Truths can no where be found than in Christ; nay, they can be found no where but *in Christ, by whom Grace and Truth came, Joh.* 1. 17. They who are of the Truth can't but give up themselves to Jesus Christ, by whom, and in whom alone is the true Knowledge of God, and Men's Happiness.

2. *They do truly believe on Jesus Christ.*

Every one who is inlightned to see the divine Certainty and Excellency of Truth, must needs believe in Christ by whom the Truth is manifested and testified: There is no such Soul who does not receive and embrace the Truth in the Love and Power of it: It sees that Glory in the divine Perfections which frees it from its servile Fears and Dread of God, and emboldens it to go to him as the Fountain of all Good. And no Man can come to the Father but by Christ, *Joh.* 14. 6. When the Soul has the Certainty of the Truths of God which are reveal'd in the Gospel; that God is reconcilable to Sinners by and thro' Christ, that he

he has satisfied divine Justice for Sin, and purchased the Favour of God, and Reconciliation to him, that the Promises and Offers of God in the Gospel are true and certain, it can't help trusting on Christ, and venturing it self with him. When it sees the Terrors of Sin, the horrid, hateful, and accursed Nature of it, its own Unlikeness to God, its Impotency, Wretchedness, and Misery; at the same Time it sees the Truth and Goodness of the Gospel-Revelation concerning Christ, it durst not but believe in Christ, and look to him as the Way of its Access to God, Union to, and Communion with him. John 6. 45. *Every Man that hath heard, and learned of the Father, cometh unto me.* He can't but believe Christ to be that which the Gospel testifies of him, for that is the Testimony of Christ concerning himself, and 'tis in him that the Truth of God is manifested, and discovered to the Mind. Nothing in the Way will hinder such a Soul from believing in Christ: His Pride sinks, his Prejudices vanish, his Fears are overcome, and he sees the greatest Safety in trusting to him, and the Way of Salvation by him, and can't but give Credit to his Testimony concerning God, and himself.

3. *This Faith in Christ, and Love of and Devotion to the Truth, is that Subjection which Christ requires.*

The whole Scope and Design of the Gospel is to bring Men to believe in Christ, to depend all on his Satisfaction and the Merit of his Obedience, and the Power of his Intercession for Acceptance with God; Deliverance from the Guilt, and Power of Sin; for Grace, Holiness, and Heaven. This was the great End of Christ's coming into the World, of his Death and Sufferings, of the Purchase, and Gift of his Holy Spirit, to enlighten the Minds of Men; and this is the great Condition of the Covenant of Grace, that grand Charter of Pardon and Peace with God. John 1. 12. *But to as many as received him, to them gave he Power to become the Sons of God; even to them that believe on his Name.* And Chap. 3. 15, 16, 18, 36. *That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting Life.* He that believeth on him is not condemned. *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting Life.* And Ch. 5. 24, 38, 40.

5. 24, 38, 40. So he who through the Faith of Christ is purified, or is restored to the Knowledge of the Truth, and is a sincere impartial Lover of it, is so far restored to that primitive Holiness and Perfection of his Nature which he lost in *Adam*. So far as he is a Lover of the Truth, and addicted, devoted, and given up to that, so far he is united to God, and dwells with him, and in him, and partakes of his Nature; and this is that Subjection which Christ requires. He never design'd to gain any other Subjects in his Kingdom of Grace, but such as these; and to make Men such is the End of his Administration and Government in that Kingdom. John 17. 19. *And for their Sakes I sanctify my self, that they also might be sanctified through the Truth.* This is the Fruit of the Death of Christ, and the Sealing of his Spirit, and Evidence of Adoption. *Gal.* 4. 6. This is that which Christ prays his Father for them, *John* 17. 17. And of this Subjection to Christ, or Freedom from Sin, and Liberty to Holiness, is that spoken, John 8. 31, 32. *If ye continue in my Word, then are ye my Disciples indeed; and ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free.* This Subjection to the Truth in Christ, or rather the Truth to which Christ's Disciples are subject, is called the *perfect Law of Liberty*, Jam. 1. 25. These are the Subjects Christ came to make, he neither expects nor desires any but such as these.

4. Part. *Every such Soul will hear the Voice of Christ.* *Every one that is of the Truth, heareth my Voice.* All that by the Grace of God, are rescued from the Power of the Father of Lies, and brought to receive and submit to the Influence of Truth, will hear Christ's Voice. What this hearing Christ's Voice is has been in Part explain'd already, viz. They will become his Disciples, they will bear Faith & true Allegiance to him as their Lord. By the Power of Truth he makes them willing, *Psal.* 110. 3. Under this Particular I shall only endeavour further to explain, what is this hearing Christ's Voice. Now 'tis easy to observe in general, that, according to what was before said, to hear, or to hearken is very often in Scripture put for Obedience, or signifies the same as to obey. So when Men are said to refuse

refuse to hear, 'tis meant they will not be obedient. *Jer.* 11. 10. *Chap.* 13. 10. So *Chap.* 22. 21. and many other Places. It is also often used to signify a diligent Notice and Attention, a careful Regard of what is spoken and earnest Attention to it. Prov. 8. 6, 7. *Hear for I will speak of excellent Things, &c. Isa.* 28. 23. *Give ye Ear, and hear my Voice; hearken and hear my Speech.* So 'tis often used to signify God's hearing, i. e. granting the Prayers of his People, *Psalm* 10. 17. and 17. 1. Agreeably to these Usages of the Word in Scripture, the Phrase intends these Things.

1. *That they will diligently attend to, study and learn the Will of Christ in his Word.*

They will hear his Voice as those who are listning to know what he says, and desire to be informed of his Will and Way. We read, that when the People had conceived a great Opinion of him, *they were very attentive to hear him.* Now they who are of the Truth, whose Minds are enlightned and renewed to taste the Sweetness of divine Truth, will listen to the Word of Christ, they will study and search it abundantly, they will take great Notice of it, and desire to be as much acquainted with it as they can, and to understand the true Meaning of it, what is the Will of Christ made known and manifested in it. You find this given as the Character of godly People, Lovers of the Truth, and Religion, all over the Scriptures. Psalm 119. 97, 98, 99. *O how love I thy Law, it is my Meditation all the Day. Thou through thy Commandments hast made me wiser than mine Enemies, for they are ever with me. I have more Understanding than all my Teachers, for thy Testimonies are my Meditation.* And again, Ver. 103. *How sweet are thy Words unto my Taste, yea sweeter than Honey to my Mouth.* And V. 111. *Thy Testimonies have I taken as an Heritage for ever, for they are the Rejoicing of my Heart.* And Ver. 131. *I opened my Mouth, and panted, for I longed for thy Commandments.* In like Manner other holy Men both in the Old Testament, and the New. And how can it be otherwise? How can a Man love the Truth of Christ in Christ, be devoted to it, and begotten by it, and yet not delight to hear

hear Chriſt ſpeak, not ſtudy his Word, where that Truth is revealed, and ſet himſelf to ſearch for it as for the richeſt Treaſure below Heaven; ſitting down there as at the Feet of Jeſus Chriſt, and looking into the Mirrour of Truth? How is it poſſible for ſuch a Soul not to deſire to converſe with that divine Oracle, and hear Chriſt in it deliver the great, ſweet, and divine Truths which have overcome his Soul, captivated his Heart, and given him the divineſt Refreſhments and Conſolations. The more they can know of the Word of Chriſt, the more of that Truth they ſee which is ſweeter to them than Honey, or the Honey-Comb; the more they know of God, the Fountain of all Truth, and of all that is wiſe, and good, and happifying to their Souls.

2. *Thus to hear Chriſt's Voice, is to be heartily obedient to his Word.*

It is in and thro' the Word they do hear Chriſt's Voice, and according to the Word, and never any otherwiſe. There are the Truths which Chriſt has manifeſted and revealed concerning God: There are the Terms of Life, the Charter and Condition of their Pardon; there are all the Promiſes of Mercy and Salvation; there are the Laws of Grace, and Means of Holineſs, and Comfort. Now they who are of the Truth, who are enlightned and renewed, will ſee the Excellency of the Goſpel, the Fitneſs and Suitableneſs of it as a Law of Grace and Rule of Life. 'Tis there they behold the Glory of Chriſt, and through that God hath ſhined into their Hearts, 2 Cor. 4. 6. *For God who commanded the Light to ſhine out of Darkneſs, hath ſhined in our Hearts, to give the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God, in the Face of Jeſus Chriſt.* And as this is that which through the Influence of the Spirit, worketh effectually in them that believe, they can't but receive it as the Word of God. 1 *Theſſ.* 2. 13. That is, ſincerely and unfeignedly yield Obedience to it; for this Word by which they are begotten to God, liveth and abideth for ever, 1 *Pet.* 1. 23, 25. As this Word of God is revealed by Chriſt, and has his Authority upon it, they who know the Truth as it is in Jeſus, muſt feel the commanding

commanding Power and Force of that Word, and take it as the Rule of their Behaviour, and the *Man of their Counsel.* How solemn is that Warning of the Apostle, Heb. 12. 25. *See that ye refuse not him that speaketh*, &c. Our Saviour once and again declares, that no Man loves him, and therefore none is of the Truth, if he *does not love his Commandments, and keep them.*

3. *To hear Christ's Voice, is to make his Word in the Gospel, the Rule and Measure of all our Faith, and all our Actions.*

Those that belong to the Truth will be disposed in all Things to be obedient to Christ ; and 'tis in his Word he speaks ; there he reveals all the Things of God which he intends to make known to his Subjects. These Truths are the Laws of his Kingdom, as well as the Weapons and Arms he makes Use of to gain Subjects to his Government. There he has told us all that of God which is to be known in this World. There are the Terms of our Submission to him, and the Grounds and Articles of our Faith ; and whoever is of the Truth will make the Word of Christ the Law of all his Faith in God, and of all his Obedience to Christ, as well as some of it. There's no coming to God but by Christ, and there is no coming by him in any other Way than that which he has prescribed, and on the Terms which he has stated and determined. He that knows the Truth, and is born of God, can have no Faith in God, but is founded on his own Promise, and warranted and directed by his own Word. We can't believe in God, but by believing that Truth which Christ has reveal'd of him, and that is to believe that he is what Christ has told us he is ; and to believe in his Grace and Reconciliation only on the Terms which Christ has provided and promised, therefore our Faith is said to be a *setting to our Seal that God is true, and a receiving the Testimony which he hath given us concerning his Son.* John 3. 33. And by Unbelief, we are said *to make God a Liar.* Agreeably hereto, the Gospel is called, *the Word of Faith*, Rom. 10. 8. It is said by the same Apostle to be the *Power of God unto Salvation to every one that believeth, because therein is the*

Righteouſneſs of God revealed from Faith to Faith. Rom. 1. 16, 17. There is no Rule of Faith but the Goſpel; no Terms of our Acceptance with God but what are found there; and a renewed Soul never found, nor Deſires to find any other; for the Promiſe of God, and his Truth and Grace therein reveal'd, is Foundation enough for his believing. He ought not to believe leſs of God than Chriſt has told him, nor may he believe more, or otherwiſe; *For none knows the Father but the Son, and none can know him but he to whom the Son reveals him*, Matth. 7. 27. Neither has he any other Bounds of his Obedience but the Word of Chriſt. God requires no other Obedience but that which Chriſt in his Name requires, nothing otherwiſe, nothing more, nor nothing leſs. Therefore he that is of the Truth makes the Goſpel the Rule of his Actions, the univerſal, and only Directory of all his Faith and Obedience.

4. *To hear Chriſt's Voice, is to make his Word the Meaſure and Ground of all our Hope and Expectation from God.*

He that is of the Truth can have no Hope of any Thing from God but by Chriſt. *No Man can come to the Father, but by him*, John 14. 6. He can have no Communion with God but by Chriſt, no Good can come to him from God, but through Chriſt: He is the Medium of all gracious Communication from God, and Communion with him. We can have no juſt Hope of knowing any Thing of God's Will but what Chriſt reveals, for in him is *the Fulneſs of the Godhead*; and with him are all the Treaſures of Wiſdom, and Knowledge. And as none have a Right to give Men any Hope of God from God but he, ſo no Soul that knows God and Chriſt, will deſire any other Ground of Hope than what God has given by his Son, and what Chriſt in his Word makes known. He can't juſtly expect any Grace from God, but what is according to his Word and Promiſe in Chriſt. He can't expect any Reward from God in Heaven, but what is promiſed by Chriſt. He can't expect any Knowledge of God, or concerning the Way of his Grace and Favour, but what Chriſt reveals, and which is by, and through the Word, as the Medium of it. For this he knows is the Truth of God and the ſecure Foundation

dation of his Hope, and Truſt, and this he knows is enough to anſwer all the Purpoſes which Chriſt propounded in it. He does not hope for any Thing different from what Chriſt has told him in his Word; he deſires no more than what is there promiſed, nor in a Way different from that Promiſe. His Prayer is, *Remember thy Word on which thou haſt cauſed me to hope*, Pſalm 119. 49. That's the Ground on which he dare to hope; he would have nothing leſs, & he deſires nothing more. He will expect no other Diſcovery of God, no Good from him but what Chriſt makes, and can wiſh for no other Way of Communion with him, but through the Inſtrumentality of that, and according to its Terms and Directions; this is the Voice which Chriſt has ſpoken. And whoever he ſpeaks by, be it by his Miniſters, or his Spirit, he will never ſpeak differently from it, or make known any Ground of Hope or Good to be hoped from God, but what is in it.

***

SERMON VII.

I COME now to the USE and IMPROVEMENT we are to make of this Subject handled in the foregoing Discourse.

USE I. *We learn hence, That though Christ's Subjects are only willing Subjects, yet they are under the most powerful Constraints of any in the World.*

It seems a Paradox, that Men should be intirely free and yet constrained. Many Men have conceived great Difficulties and Prejudices about, and against the invincible Operations of divine Grace, and the Freedom of Man's Will, and seem not to allow of any other kind of Freedom in Man than his having a Power, either to love God, or hate him; to sin or not sin: But it will be found a most certain Truth, that though the Subjects of Christ are only such as are free in their Actions, their Obedience and Subjection; and of most hearty and unfeigned Choice devoted to Christ; yet there are no Subjects in the World under such Constraints to their Obedience as they be. All the penal Laws of Princes, all the Fines and Prisons, Axes and Haltars in the World, don't so oblige their Subjects to Obedience to the Rulers of the World, as the meer Force and Power of Truth, does compel the Subjects of Christ to his Obedience. A Man whose Eyes are open in the Sun-shine sees Light, but then he can't help it at the same Time: He is constrained to see it; the Rays of Light will enter into his Eyes and reach the inward Sensory; neither can a Man help seeing Truth, when Christ by his Spirit renews his

his Underſtanding, removes the Diſorders of it, and lets in the Light of Truth upon his Mind; and when the Underſtanding ſees the Evidence of the divine Truth of the Goſpel, it cannot be at Liberty to withhold its Aſſent to that Truth any longer. Whatever Propoſition a Man ſees to be true, he can't disbelieve, he has not Power to do ſo, the Evidence of Truth will force the Aſſent of his Mind, and make him yield to it; for to disbelieve that which he ſees to be true, is at the ſame Time to ſee and not ſee; and to have ſuch a Power, is to have a Power to ſee and not ſee at the ſame Time; and what ſort of Contradiction this is need not be ſaid. When a Man is of the Truth, when his Mind is enlightened and renewed, he ſees the Reality, Goodneſs and Excellency there is in the divine Truth which Chriſt has made known. Now what he knows and ſees to be good and fit for him, indeed he chuſes, and willingly follows, and deſires to be united to; but at the ſame Time he can't but chuſe it, he would deny his own Nature, and croſs the firſt Principles of Humanity not to do it. When a Man has upon his Mind a ſtrong and powerful Apprehenſion and Perſwaſion of the glorious Excellency, the infinite Beauty and Perfection of God, he will love Him; all the Force in the World will not hinder him, he can't help it. So when he ſees the Excellency of the Truth, which Chriſt has revealed concerning God, the Fitneſs of depending on Chriſt; his Sutableneſs and Sufficiency to be the Redeemer and Saviour of the Soul, he will depend on him, he can't but truſt him. When he ſees the Amableneſs of that Virtue, Devotion and Piety to God, that Righteouſneſs and Holineſs which the Goſpel requires, he can't refuſe it, for he can't but love it, and feel his own Perfection and Happineſs advanced by it: And juſt ſo clearly as he beholds that Truth, Goodneſs and Excellency, ſo ſtrong will be the Current of his Mind and Actions towards it. Indeed theſe are the Objects of his free Choice, but at the ſame Time he can't but chuſe them, unleſs he can chuſe to feel miſerable and wretched rather than to feel happy and bleſſed. And if a Man has a Power to do ſo, then he can act moſt reaſonably and

moſt

moſt unreaſonably at the ſame Time. He can act like a moſt wiſe and prudent Man, and yet like the greateſt Fool, yea, worſe than a Devil in the ſame Time. The holy Angels do moſt ſincerely chuſe to act holily, and to love God, and yet at the ſame Time they can't chuſe to do or act otherwiſe. God himſelf the moſt free Agent chuſes to love himſelf, and to glorify himſelf; and yet no Man can believe that he can chuſe to do otherwiſe.

USE II. *Hence learn, that thoſe only are truly religious, who are true Chriſtians.*

There are many Sects and Denominations of Men, who in their different Characters, and ſeveral Denominations ſeem to be exceeding devout and religious; not only Perſons who worſhip falſe Gods, and live in corporal Idolatry, but Multitudes who ſuperſtitiouſly worſhip the true God, and in that Way are much taken up in ſuch Rites, and Modes as they call Worſhip and Religion; and 'tis commonly ſaid of them, that they are very devout, or very religious. And ſome are ſo vain, and ſuch Strangers to the Truth, as to think that being ſincere and zealous in their Way is very ſafe, and that all Religions, as they are called, if Perſons be ſincere, will end in the ſame Thing and ſecure Men's Happineſs; which is the ſame in Effect as to ſay, if a Man be a devout and ſincere Lover of Lies, and Falſhood, it is as well as if he be a ſincere Lover of Truth; but Chriſt has let us know there can be no true Religion but his. Every one who is of the Truth, belongs to his Family, and will be one of his Subjects, and hear his Voice. The true God, the great Jehovah, is the only true and right Object of all religious Worſhip and Obedience; and thoſe Truths which flow from his Nature and Will, and Relations to Man, are the only Truths of Religion. Every other Object of Worſhip is a falſe God; and every Thing reſpecting his Nature, or Will, every Notion, or Apprehenſion concerning him, his Nature, and Perfections, Will, and Obedience which is not right, and agreeable to its Principle and Archetype in the divine Nature, and Will, is a Falſhood, and will remain eternally a Falſhood.

Falſhood. Men's thinking a Thing to be true, or falſe, makes it neither the one nor the other, it makes no Alteration in Truth, for the Nature of that is unchangeable: So that no Man is or can be a truly religious Man who is not a true Chriſtian. Such a Manifeſtation of the divine Nature, Perfections, Will, and Truth is made by, and in Chriſt, as exhibits that of God which is the real, and eternal Truth of God; and there is always a Conformity, and Harmony of Truth with it ſelf. No Man can have the Truth in his Heart, and be renewed and enlightned to diſcern it, but that he will ſee that Truth in Chriſt, and feel his Soul ſweetly conſenting to it, and united with it. 'Tis eaſy to ſee this if you run over the ſeveral great, fundamental, and neceſſary Truths of Religion. There can be no true Religion but where there is a Senſe, or Knowledge, and Belief of the one true God, of the abſolute Simplicity, and infinite Perfection of the divine Nature, of the Sinfulneſs and infinite Evil of Sin, of the Miſery of Man by Sin, and his Fall from God; of his loſt, undone State by Reaſon of Sin, of the Neceſſity of his Recovery from his ruinous, deplorable Condition, and his Reſtoration to Holineſs and the Image and Life of God, by the mighty Power and infinite Grace of God; and that this muſt be done in a Way honourable to the divine Perfections or not at all. That Man's Happineſs lies in his Reſtoration to the primitive Beatitude and Holineſs of his Nature, and the Agreeableneſs of his Faculties, Actings and Deſires to the Nature and Will of God, in finding God in his Soul, and himſelf united to him by Love and Likeneſs. Now all this appears no where ſo as in Chriſt, nor no where but in him, and there it is all exhibited and diſcovered: Therefore the Soul which has a true Senſe of Religion, finds ſuch a Manifeſtation of the Truth in Chriſt as is ſatisfactory, anſwers its Deſires, and opens the Object and Nature of Happineſs, and it can't but cloſe with it, and finds in all Reſpects that that is true which the Apoſtle witneſſeth, Acts 4. 12. *Neither is there Salvation in any other, for there is none other Name given under Heaven among Men, whereby we muſt be ſaved.*

USE

USE III. *This Subject may direct us into an Understanding of the true Nature of Religion.*

Religion is a Thing of the greatest Importance in the World; no Man can ever be holy or happy without it; and every Man would fain have so much of it as to do his Turn for Happiness, though few understand what it is. There are many Controversies and Disputes in the World about it, many fierce Debates and Contentions which arise from Men's Pride and Lusts, and not from Religion. Most Men find it easier to dispute about Religion than to practise it: But here our Lord lets us know that to be of the Truth is to have the right Knowledge and Principles of Religion in us; and all such as these will hear his Voice. There is a Conformity of the Head to the Heart, a Consent between them; between the Truth without, and within the Soul; all is derived from God by Christ, united to him, and terminated in him. Here are three Things contain'd, which may illustrate this.

1. *It consists in a right Understanding, or receiving the Truth in Christ, or as it is revealed by Christ.*

There must be a right Disposition to receive the Truth, and a real actual Receiving it. The Eye must not only be fit to receive the Rays of Light, but the Light must shine into it: The Soul must be renewed, its Prejudices removed, its Power to apprehend divine Truths restored by the Working of the Holy Spirit on it, and that Truth which Christ has revealed in the Gospel rightly apprehended. A Man's thinking he sees the Truth of Christ don't prove him to be a Christian. The strongest Perswasion, the greatest Confidence that a Man sees, and understands the Truth don't make it certain that what he sees is the Truth. For the Nature of Truth being unchangeable, it can never be altered by a Man's Perswasion that he sees, or does not see it. As Truth is the same whether a Man sees it or not, so it is the same whether a Man has such a Perswasion or no. The Truths which Christ has revealed in the Gospel are at all Times the same, and it is not our thinking that we receive or understand them, that denominates us to be of the Truth; but the right Understanding,

ſtanding, and real Receiving of them. If we receive ſomething which Chriſt has not revealed, inſtead of that which he has, we are not of the Truth, but of Error, ſo far we belong not to the Family of Truth, but of Miſtake, Deceit and Falſhood. It is that very Truth, that very Thing which Chriſt has reveal'd in the Goſpel which is to be rightly apprehended by the Mind, thoſe very Ideas to be excited there which he intended ſhould be excited by the Word, or elſe we are not enlightned by the Spirit. And the inward Perception of Truth, or Manifeſtation of it to our Minds muſt agree with that Revelation of Truth which the Goſpel makes, and exactly anſwer to it, or elſe our Minds are a falſe Glaſs, and not rightly diſpoſed to receive the Light of Truth: And they receive Error and falſe Images inſtead of Truth. Joh. 4. 12. *I am the Light of the World: He that followeth me, ſhall not walk in Darkneſs, but ſhall have the Light of Life.* And Chap. 12. 44, 45, 46, and 48 compared. The ſpiritual, gracious Illumination of the Mind never conveys any Knowledge of any Truth different from, or not contained in the outward Revelation, but helps the Mind to diſcern the true Meaning of that Word. If any Thing elſe is apprehended inſtead of that, or the Meaning of that is miſapprehended, there is ſo far no true Light or Knowledge of Truth in the Mind. And ſo far as a Man is renewed, or is of the Truth, it is impoſſible there ſhould be a Diſagreement between the Truth in his Mind, and the Truth in the Word.

2. *It conſiſts in a real Conformity of the Soul to the Truth, or a Conſent and Agreement of the Powers and Actings of the Mind to the Truth of the Goſpel manifeſted to it.*

All the Knowledge in the World, all the Light that can ſhine into the Heart, if it ſhould reſt idly there, makes no Man the better Man, or Chriſtian. Prov. 19. 2. *Alſo, that the Soul be without Knowledge it is not good.* Without Knowledge it can't be good. Nor will meer Knowledge if the Heart remains unchanged, be any Thing but bare Speculation; an uſeleſs, and unprofitable Thing. But

whenever the Mind is enlightned, and renewed, as it will rightly apprehend the Truth of Christ, so it will approve, love, and embrace it, and there will be a Conformity to it; there can be no Religion without, and this is true Religion. He that is of the Truth heareth Christ's Voice, and is a Subject of Christ; there is a Conformity of his Soul to the Truth of Christ which appears there; his Heart is knit and united to it; the Powers of his Mind are conformed to that Truth, and act congruously to it; so that the Truth it self is acted and lived by the Man. When the Mind sees the Truth or Reality of the glorious Simplicity, Power, Wisdom, Holiness of God, and his transcendant and infinite Goodness, his Love, and Grace in his Son Jesus Christ, it feels an inconceivable Delight and Satisfaction in that boundless Ocean of Good and Perfection, and does as it were open and stretch it self to grasp as much of it as it can take in. When it sees the inflexible Justice of God, it trembles before that bright and pure Flame, and feels a Sort of infinite Abasement in its own infinite Unlikeness to that spotless Rectitude and Perfection. When it views the boundless Goodness of God it is filled with an overflowing Admiration and Amazement at the inexhaustible Stores and Treasures of the Riches of that Goodness, and the Height, and Length, and Depth, and Breadth of Grace and Love which passeth Knowledge. It stands dumb, and speechless and as it were dead at the Sight of its own cursed Ingratitude, and base Returns to him, is fill'd with Indignation at itself, and a Self-loathing for its rising up against, and overlooking such infinite Stoops and Reaches of boundless Love and Mercy. When the Soul has realizing Views of the Immensity of God, his Self-original, and eternal Excellence, his infinite Knowledge, his Independency and Ubiquity, it sinks into nothing, feels itself less than an Attom; and its Wonder and Thanksgiving rises with Astonishment at the transcendant Height of infinite Glory, and the gracious Notice such a God takes of such a Nothing. So when it sees the particular Truths of the Gospel in the Relations of God to Man, and of himself to God, and other Men, there appears to be a Sweetness

Sweetneſs and Beauty in them exciting vehement Deſires in the Soul and longing Wiſhes to be perfectly wrought into them, to imitate God, and act as much like him as poſſible. The Truths which are the proper Objects of the Soul's acting upon, it conſents to; and there is a Correſpondence between them, and its Actions, and Deſires. So thoſe which reſpect the whole Man, Soul and Body, they govern both, and draw the Man to a Conformity in his Actions to the Intention and Meaning of them. This is the Meaning of that Text, John 8. 32. *And ye ſhall know the Truth, and the Truth ſhall make you free.* So it is ſaid, John 17. 17, 19. *Sanctify them thro' thy Truth, thy Word is Truth. That they alſo might be ſanctified through the Truth.*

3. *This Truth is both received, and lived by, or through Chriſt.*

It is the Truth of God, but it is diſcovered in and by Chriſt, revealed in his Word, diſcovered in his Life, Death, Reſurrection, Aſcenſion, Interceſſion, and Glory; and communicated by the Enlightning of the Spirit. This is what Chriſt ſays, John 16. 13, 14. *Howbeit, when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he will guide you into all Truth: For he ſhall not ſpeak of himſelf, but whatſoever he ſhall hear, that ſhall he ſpeak; and he will ſhew you Things to come. He ſhall glorify me, for he ſhall receive of mine, and ſhall ſhew it unto you.* The Truth is received from Chriſt as ſent by God to make it known to us; by his Authority he declares it, and by his Spirit makes us ſee the Reality and Certainty of it as it is in him. The Soul receives the Truth from Chriſt, and upon his Authority; 'tis that which gives it its peculiar Excellency and commanding Power in our State and Miſery: So that divine Life in the Soul is alſo in, and by Chriſt, i. e. both by Power and Help from him; and for the Love the Soul has to him, and the Excellency of thoſe Truths as they have Relation to Chriſt: And all that Life of Truth and Holineſs, is referred to God, and acted towards him with a Dependance on Chriſt for the Acceptance of all. This is the Life and Soul of all true Religion: If Chriſt be left out, it is all nothing

but the poor proud Struggles and vain Efforts of corrupt Man, of unregenerate Nature, to pacify the Anger of God and merit his Favour.

USE IV. *Hence learn, there can be nothing new in Religion, unleſs God makes a new Revelation of himſelf.*

Falſe Religions vary without End, there is a Sort of infinite Diverſity in their Rites and Ceremonies; in their Worſhip and Superſtitions, in their Fancies and Miſtakes. 'Tis the Nature of Falſhood to be various, inconſtant and uncertain; but Truth is the ſame, inflexible and unchangeable. God can reveal more of himſelf than he has reveal'd if he pleaſes, and then more Truths may be known than are known already. But he is the ſame in himſelf eternally, and the only Object of all true religious Worſhip, Faith and Obedience. And every one who is of the Truth, or truly enlightned to know God and his Truth, heareth the Voice of Chriſt, in whom only all the Truth of God is made known to fallen ſinful Man. There was a Difference in ſome Things in the Religion of *Adam* after the Fall, and the antideluvian Patriarchs; and the Religion of *Noah*, and his Poſterity: And between theirs, and the Religion of the Jews, the Old Teſtament Church; and between that, and Chriſtianity. But this Difference was only according to the different Degrees of Revelation which God made of himſelf and his Will in Chriſt, and nothing can make any Difference but ſuch a Revelation. Nothing can be known of God but what he reveals of himſelf: And he reveals nothing of himſelf to fallen Man but by, and through Chriſt. And that Truth which is to renew and ſanctify the Soul, now is the ſame that it was ever ſince Chriſt aſcended, and finiſhed the Canon of the holy Scripture in the New Teſtament. There is not one Syllable more known of God than is made known in the Goſpel of his Son, nor one Truth more knowable; and therefore there is not one Duty to be done but what in like Circumſtances was ſo ever ſince Chriſt reveal'd God in the Goſpel. There is no other Way of our Illumination, Renovation and Sanctification than there has been ever

ever since Christianity was preached in the World. There is not one Truth and Rule of Faith and Duty for one Man, for one Country, and another for another, but the same for all. Eph. 4. 4, 5, 6. *There is one Body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one Hope of your Calling ; one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God, and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.* There is no new Way to Heaven, no new Truths or Duties of Religion nor never will, nor can be 'till God makes a new Revelation.

Two Particulars may more especially be considered here,

1. *The renewing Influences of the Spirit create no new Faculties in the Soul.*

There are several Metaphors used in Scripture concerning the Renovation, or Regeneration of the Soul which seem to import a Creation. Grace is sometimes called a new Creature. *Gal.* 6. 15. A converted Man is called a *New Man ;* and such are said to be created anew in *Christ Jesus. Eph.* 2. 10. *Col.* 3. 10. But from all such Expressions we are not to suppose there are any new Faculties created and infused which the Man had not. The Understanding is the same, the Will is the same, the Affections are the same, considered as Powers or Faculties of the humane Soul. The Senses, and all the Inlets to the Mind are the same. The Soul has the same Ways of seeing, hearing, learning, that it had before, and nothing new. The Faculties which were disordered, are mended and rectified : The Understanding which was dark, is now light ; the Will and Affections which were set upon irregular Objects, are set upon right ones, but they are in themselves the same humane Powers and Faculties. A Man that has a Film taken off from his Eye sees Things which he did not see before, but he has not a new Eye. So in spiritual Things, the renewed Mind is the same Mind as to all that was essential to it as a reasonable humane Mind. The same Understanding that apprehended, and judged of physical or moral Things, apprehends and judges of divine and spiritual Things. The same Will which

which chose other Things, chuses God and Christ, and the Truth. The same Affections which before run out after other Things, now follow Holiness and Likeness to God as the Soul's Perfection and Blessedness. What the Saints will have in Heaven we know not, when their Bodies will be made as the Apostle says, *Spiritual Bodies*; or how pure unbodied Spirits perceive and act, we know not: How the Saints will act, or what Powers they will have, when in Heaven they receive direct Ideas of God, and divine Things, we can't tell; but here, where all their Knowledge is communicated by the Intervention of the Means adapted to their present Condition, the most holy Man in the World has no other Faculties or Powers of Soul than he had before.

2. *The renewing Influences of the Holy Spirit, give the Knowledge of nothing new to the Soul; i. e. of nothing but of that Truth revealed by Christ in the Word.*

Every one that is of the Truth hears the Voice of Christ; that is, of that Testimony which he has given concerning God and Himself; the State of Man, and the Way of his Reconciliation to God, the Holiness which the Gospel requires as the Means of his Perfection and Happiness. It is the Voice of Christ in his Word, the Truth which Christ Himself and his Holy Spirit has revealed there: The enlighting of the Spirit gives no Notice nor Intimation of any Thing that is not there. Christ did of old at sundry Times, and in diverse Manners, make known his Will to the Penmen of the Scripture, but that Illumination was not to renew, and sanctify them, but to teach and instruct others: But the Illumination of the Spirit which renews the Soul, reveals nothing more, nor beside the Revelation of the Gospel. This is and ever will be the Instrument of the Regeneration and Sanctification of Men, *Rom.* 1. 16. *For it is the Power of God unto Salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.* The Illumination of the Holy Spirit clears the Man's Mind of the Darkness which covered it before, clears it of its Prejudices against the Truth, strengthens it, and holds its Attention to the Truth, and enables it to see the divine Certainty, and Goodness of the Things

Things revealed; makes it take notice of those great and wonderful Things of God which are spoken of in the Word; but it shews the Man nothing else but what is contained and declared there. He that fancies he knows more than the Word contains, or knows any Thing of God and his Will beside, sinks into Enthusiasm and Superstition. In all that he fancies more than is in the Word, or beside what is in the Word, he has a God and a Christ of his own making; and a Religion which his Fancy and Imagination have minted for him. If by Illumination and Renovation of the Soul the Mind had any Knowlege of God or Christ but what is declared in the Gospel or different from that, then the Standard of every Man's Religion must be the Impulse of his own Mind, and not the Gospel; the Word of God must be judged by his particular Revelation and Sense of Things, and not his Sense of Things by the Word of God, and so the Voice of Christ in his Word which has had the most powerful, miraculous Attestations of Heaven to confirm it, will be of little or no Use in Religion; the Voice which Christ's Disciples are to hear is still to be spoken in a new Revelation. But this is not the Case, the Voice of Christ is that Revelation he has made of God in the Gospel, and the Discovery of Christ in his Offices, and his mediatorial Character and Actions, and his wonderful Person. And he who is of the Truth hears that, he knows this is the Will of God, and Christ's Voice, and He will never have nor desire another. He that hears, i. e. Obeys, and follows any other, either secret Whisper or open Call, is none of Christ's; he don't belong to the Truth, he is not of Christ's Sheep, but a Goat that belongs to another Fold. They who are of the Truth neither know, nor desire to know any other Voice of the Spirit, but the Voice of Christ made known to them, by and in his Word, through the Teaching of the Holy Spirit, who is sent to renew and sanctify them by the Word of Truth. Wherefore Christ tells us, that his *Sheep know him, and follow him, for they know his Voice, but a Stranger they will not follow, for they know not the Voice of Strangers.* John 10. 3, 4, 5. So that there can be nothing new in Religion,

Religion, in the Religion of Chriſt, as and ſo far as ſuch, 'till he makes a new Revelation of the Mind of God. And yet notwithſtanding this,

USE V. *The renewing of the Holy Spirit makes an univerſal Change of the Heart and Life.*

In the Regeneration of the Soul the old Faculties are not changed away for new ones, nor are any new ones created and added to them; there are no Diſcoveries of new Truths made to the Mind, and yet there is an univerſal Change of the Man in his Heart and Life, 2 Cor. 5. 17. *Therefore if any Man be in Chriſt, he is a new Creature; old Things are paſt away, behold all Things are become new.* "Old Thoughts, old Principles, old Practices "are paſt away, and the renewed Man acts from new "Principles, by new Rules, for new Ends, and in new "Company." He knows no new Doctrine which was not all taught and contain'd in the Bible before; but he knows it in a new Manner, e. g. it was before known to him in the Letter, in a dull, careleſs Manner; he had a View of the Truth as a doubtful uncertain Thing; he received it as a Thing which was probably true, and had ſuch humane Teſtimonies and Arguments for it as he could not diſprove; and ſo he let it reſt. He ſaw it as a probable Scheme, and perhaps for the moſt Part it appeared ſomething likely to anſwer the End propoſed. He had ſome Eſteem of the Advantages of Redemption, as he could not but deſire Happineſs: He wiſhed to reap the Advantages of Chriſt's Undertaking, ſo far as to be ſaved from Hell, and be very happy in the next World: But now the Goſpel appears to be divinely true, as real, and certain to him as any Thing that can be known by the Teſtimony of his Senſes, he reſts on the divine Teſtimony, is ſufficiently ſatisfied from the Veracity and Faithfulneſs of God, and reſts on his Teſtimony. 1 Cor. 2. 5. *That your Faith ſhould not ſtand in the Wiſdom of Men, but in the Power of God.* He now ſees the greateſt Beauty and Excellency in thoſe Truths of God which are manifeſted in Chriſt. The Myſtery of Redemption by Chriſt appears

appears not only certain to his Mind, but he ſees there is the moſt excellent Wiſdom, Power, Love, and Grace in that Way of Salvation. Chriſt appears to him the *Wiſdom of God, and the Power of God.* He ſees the greateſt Safety in truſting to him and depending on the Promiſes of the Goſpel, as ſecuring the Power and Faithfulneſs of an infinite unchanging God for their Performance; and that there can be no Safety in truſting to any Thing elſe. He now ſees that Holineſs is his Heaven and Perfection; he chuſes to be as much like God as poſſible, and to find all the Actings of his Soul, and of his whole Man in the neareſt Conformity to all the Truths of the Goſpel. That Obedience which was before his Task and Burden, he now eſteems his greateſt Privilege, Comfort and Happineſs. Thoſe Pleaſures of Sin which he loved, he not only abſtains from, but hates, and counts them his Miſery, Weakneſs, and Imperfection; his greateſt Plague, and his worſt Enemies. That Religion and Holineſs which before he deſired to be excuſed from as much as might be; to have as little of as was poſſible, and eſcape Hell; he now deſires to have as much of as poſſible, and thinks he can never have enough of it below Heaven. In ſhort, Things are quite turn'd about. God and Chriſt is got into the Place the World had before. Holineſs is got into the Place of Sin. That which pleaſed him before, now diſpleaſes him, and that which diſpleaſed him, is now his greateſt Pleaſure, and Delight: So *old Things are paſſed away, and all Things are become new.*

Before I conclude this Diſcourſe, I muſt beg you my Hearers to bring this Subject cloſe to your own Conſciences, and every one of you who pretend to be Chriſtians, faithfully enquire whether you are of the Truth, or are truly enlightned and renewed? Our Lord tells us that every one who is ſo, hears his Voice. The being a Subject of Chriſt, and hearing his Voice, is a general Mark and Characteriſtick of a renewed Soul; but though it be general yet it is infallible; as every Sign and Mark that Chriſt gives is ſo. The Danger of Miſtake, lies not in the

Generality of the Sign, but in the Treachery of the Heart. The greater Latitude there is in any Sign and Mark, the greater Room it muſt be confeſs'd there is for Deceit and Treachery in the Heart, in the Application of that Sign to yourſelves. Therefore there is the greateſt Need of a cloſe and moſt particular Application of this Sign to yourſelves, to diſcern the State and Temper of your Minds by it, that you may diſcern whether you are reſcued from the Power of the Father of Lies, and brought to be of the Truth, and belong to Chriſt, who is the Truth, and the great Diſcoverer of it. Enquire then

1. *Whether you be univerſally Subjects of Chriſt?*

He that is of the Truth hears Chriſt's Voice in one Thing as well as another. Truth is one, 'tis univerſally harmonious and of a Piece with it ſelf: And if you are of the Truth, there will be an univerſal Conſent to, and Agreement with it. Now you know that *this is God's Commandment, that we believe on the Name of his Son Jeſus Chriſt*, 1 Joh. 3.23. And that he is the only Saviour, that *there is none other Name given under Heaven among Men by which we muſt be ſaved.* Perhaps you think you ſee this Truth, and feel the Power of it in your Hearts, and find your Hearts anſwer by believing, and truſting to that Truth. So it is true that God is the moſt glorious and infinitely bleſſed Being, and deſerves all our Love, Truſt and Obedience, and you think you have a convincing, powerful Teſtimony of this in your Hearts and Conſciences. You wonder how any Body can help loving that great and glorious God; you are ſure, you ſay, you ſometimes feel the ſtrongeſt Emotions of your Paſſions and Affections towards Him.

Conſider here, that if you have a right Knowledge of Chriſt, and truly believe in Him, it will certainly purify your Hearts; and that Holineſs does not lie in the Affections and Paſſions, or in the outward Actions, but in both; and in a Conformity both of the Mind and Body, and of both together, to the Image and Will of God.

Conſider alſo, that the Love of God is a Love of Him as he has revealed himſelf by Chriſt in the Goſpel: Therefore if you truly love God, you love him as ſuch a Being

or

or love him in that Repreſentation and Diſcovery of him by Chriſt; you love all Parts of that Image, or all of God; and act under the Influence of that Love in a Likeneſs and Conformity to him. If you love Holineſs and Juſtice in God, you love it in all its Relations to Creatures, you love the Actings of it to every Creature as far as you can follow it; and deſire it in Perfection, and therein to imitate God, and be like him. You love to he true, juſt, righteous in all the Actings of it, in all the ſeveral Relations wherein you ſtand both to God and Man; therein you ſee and imitate God, and find Pleaſure and Satisfaction in your Souls. Otherwiſe you only love the Speculation of thoſe Attributes in God, and their empty Names, or ſome falſe Ideas which you have fix'd to thoſe Names; but not the Things themſelves, and therefore not God. You muſt ſee to it that you love all that Truth wherein Chriſt diſcovers God and himſelf; all thoſe various Truths, are ſeveral Branches of the ſame general Truth; and all the Actings towards it are but particular Emotions of that Principle of the Love of Truth in the Soul. So if you truſt in Chriſt for Salvation, it muſt be for that Salvation which he offers, and therefore for a Redemption from Sin, in all Kinds and Forms, and for Reſtoration to Holineſs, not in Speculation, but in acting all the Parts of it; otherwiſe you truſt Chriſt not for the Salvation he has purchaſed, and offers, but for a Salvation of your own deviſing; and have coin'd a Saviour and an Happineſs in your own Brain, which is not of God's appointing or offer. Bring Chriſt therefore into all Offices, all Characters, all Relations of your Lives, and ſee if you hear him there, if you love him, if you follow him there, and obey the Truth in all. He muſt be all to you, and for you, not only for your Juſtification, but *Wiſdom, Sanctification and Redemption.* Not all inſtead of theſe laſt: But all theſe in you, and to you; as well as for you.

2. *Are you humbly attentive to all the Ways wherein he bids you wait to hear him, that you may learn and know his Truth.*

He that is of the Truth loves to know, and poſſeſs as much of it as poſſibly he can; he is graſping and panting after it, as his Food, his Meat and Drink, his Nouriſhment, the Solace and Refreſhment of his Soul. There is an Agreement between the Truth, and Reality of Religion in the renewed Soul, and Chriſt the Author of Truth, and the Mirrour in whom it is diſcerned; he will therefore like *Martha*, ſit at the Feet of Jeſus, Luke 10. 39. When *Pilate* asked our Lord, *What is Truth*? If he had belonged to it, he would have ſtaid for an Anſwer, and not gone out before Chriſt had informed him of that weighty and important Queſtion. Thoſe who are of the Truth love the Ordinances of Chriſt, and the Place where he records his Name, and wait for the Bleſſing of divine Truth and Grace. Prov. 8. 34. *Bleſſed is the Man that heareth me, watching daily at my Gates, and waiting at the Poſts of my Doors.* Pſalm 84. begin. If you be ſavingly enlightned and renewed, you know that Ordinances and Inſtitutions of Chriſt are the ſweeteſt Places, and the moſt profitable Exerciſes; there ye will wait at the Feet of Jeſus to be taught by his Spirit and his Word; there Chriſt ſpeaks, there he makes known himſelf. Now if you are got above Ordinances, you are got beyond Chriſt. If you fancy you hear Chriſt more and better out of the Way of his Ordinances than in them; if you think Chriſt has not ſo well calculated, and fitted his Ordinances to give you Inſtruction in his Will, and can neglect them, and find ſome other Way in which you think you hear more of him, and find him better, 'tis a Sign you are following an *Ignis Fatuus*, and not the Light of Truth. That Man who deviſes a Way of his own Head or Heart, in which he thinks he hears more of Chriſt, than in the Way which Chriſt himſelf has appointed, is doubtleſs far ſunk into Enthuſiaſm and Superſtition, and following the Pride of his own Imagination, and the Suggeſtions of his Fancy inſtead of Chriſt and the Truth. A godly Man purſues Truth at the Feet of Jeſus, and where Chriſt bids him be, there he will wait to learn; there he will love to be, becauſe Chriſt is there: There ſtands the Authority of Chriſt, there's

there's the Promise of his Blessing, and Grace, and the Teaching of his Spirit. No Way can appear so wise, so good, so likely to hear the Voice of Christ, and learn of him as that in which he has bid his People be in. A godly Man when he sees the Truth, and is in the Exercise of Grace, can entertain no Hesitation about it because he is a Subject of Christ, and his Business is to learn of him, and sit at his Feet. Christ is the great Discoverer of Truth, and those who are longing to know it, desire to be where he bids them be to hear him. When Persons know how sweet it is to hear Christ, there they will be ; you can't pluck them away. They know that all the endless Imaginations of Men can't be so like to convey divine Teaching, and the Knowledge of the Truth to them as the Means which Christ has appointed, and are under a Promise of his Blessing.

3. *Is that Voice of Christ which you think you hear in your Souls, the same which he speaks in his Word, and do you try, and prove it by that* ?

When you think you feel the sweet Influences of Truth in your Souls drawing out your Hearts to God and Christ in Faith, in Love, in Joy in him, you must see to it that this is the Truth of Christ in his Word and Promises. He will never speak otherwise than his Word. He will not speak by the Light of his Spirit, any Thing but what his Spirit has spoken in his Word, as the only, entire, universal Rule of your Faith, Love, and Obedience. If you seem to have the most sublime and exalted Notions of God and Christ, as if you had some direct Ideas of the Deity ; if you have the most raised Apprehensions of Communion with God ; if in any Thing they be more than the Word declares, or different from that in its true Meaning and Design, they are too sublime to be spiritual, i. e. they must all sink down into enthusiastick Foolery, or Superstition.-----Again enquire whether you try the Light of Truth within your Minds by the Light of Truth without you, in the Word of God : Do you bring the Manifestation of God and Christ which you suppose you find in your own Souls to the Test of the Word? I don't mean whether

you

you do it in the very Time of that Manifeſtation for that many Times a Chriſtian can't do, nor needs he do; he may know that he does ſee, and believe the Truth in Jeſus, and take Chriſt at his own Offer, and during the Time of his acting Faith, or Love, &c. for him to go about to try it in ſuch Caſes is to interrupt his Communion with God, and break off the Soul from its proper Actings upon God, and Chriſt, and the Truth, but afterwards as there is need, in proper Time do you do ſo? Is this the Way and Courſe you take to prove by the Word of Chriſt that the Truth you think you ſee, is the Truth, and that it is Chriſt who by his Spirit ſpeaketh in you? Or elſe is your Way to bring the Word to the Trial by what you take to be the Truth, and Light of the Spirit in your own Minds, and interpret it by the Light that ſhines there? If you do the firſt, and find the Truth in your Hearts, anſwering and correſponding to the Truth of the Word of God, then you are the Followers of Chriſt and hear his Voice. If you do the laſt, and prove the Truth of the Word by the Truth you apprehend the Spirit ſpeaks in your Minds then you make Chriſt follow you; you have then ſet up a new Standard of Revelation, and a new Rule to try the Spirits by: This is not to try your Spirits, and the Spirit ſpeaking in you by the Spirit of Chriſt, but the Spirit of Chriſt by your Spirit and the Impreſſions on your Minds. If you determine Chriſt ſpeaks ſo becauſe you underſtand him ſo, and not that you underſtand him becauſe he ſpeaks ſo; it ſeems you hear yourſelves, and not Chriſt, and are Followers of yourſelves, and not of Chriſt.

4. *Do you ſee, and love Chriſt in the Truth?*

Truth is in itſelf the moſt amiable Object, the Delight, and Pleaſure, the Food and Happineſs of the humane Underſtanding. But the Truths of God are in their own Nature the moſt excellent, and amiable of all. They are in themſelves infinitely good and deſirable: But they have a peculiar Endearment to the Soul that is of the Truth, as they are made known by Chriſt to a fallen, and blind, and ſinful World. All that divine Truth about which Religion

is converſant, is brought to Light by Jeſus Chriſt, and ſhines in and through Him, who is the Redeemer and Saviour of Sinners. It is all brought from God to us by and through Chriſt, and all our living and acting it, and Conformity to it is terminated in God, the eternal Fountain of it, through the ſame Medium. Now, do you ſee and love Chriſt in his glorious Character, *The Light of the World*? Are you pleaſed with that glorious Character, and pleaſed to follow Him as the Diſcoverer of the true Light of God, ſhining in your Souls, and leading them to their Perfection, and Bleſſedneſs in the Poſſeſſion and Enjoyment of Truth in God? If you view and love Chriſt as the only great Medium of all Communication of Light and Truth from God to you, and act all your Religion with a Reference of it to God only by Chriſt, you are Followers of Him, and of the Truth: But if you are pleaſed with your ſelves in the Apprehenſion of your Poſſeſſion of Truth; if you are elated with your own Wiſdom and Goodneſs in it; if it helps you to ſee your own Excellency and Wiſdom ſuperiour to your Neighbours, and boaſt your ſelves in your Attainments, you then leave out Chriſt, and are paying Adoration to the Idol of your dear Self, but are blind to the Truth as it is in Jeſus: Unto whom, the King of Truth, the Light of the World, the Joy, and Hope, and Glory of every Chriſtian; be eternal Praiſes. AMEN.

FINIS.